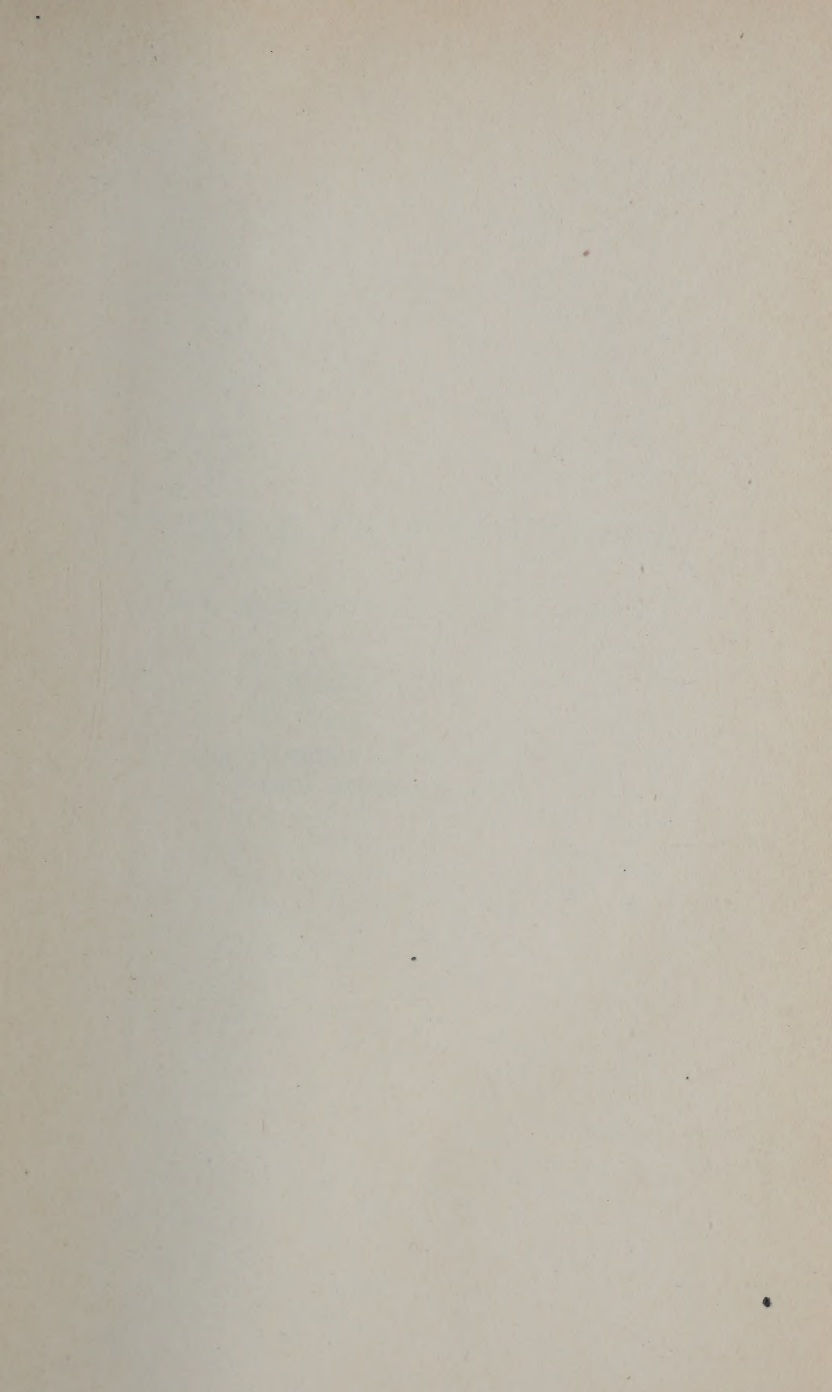
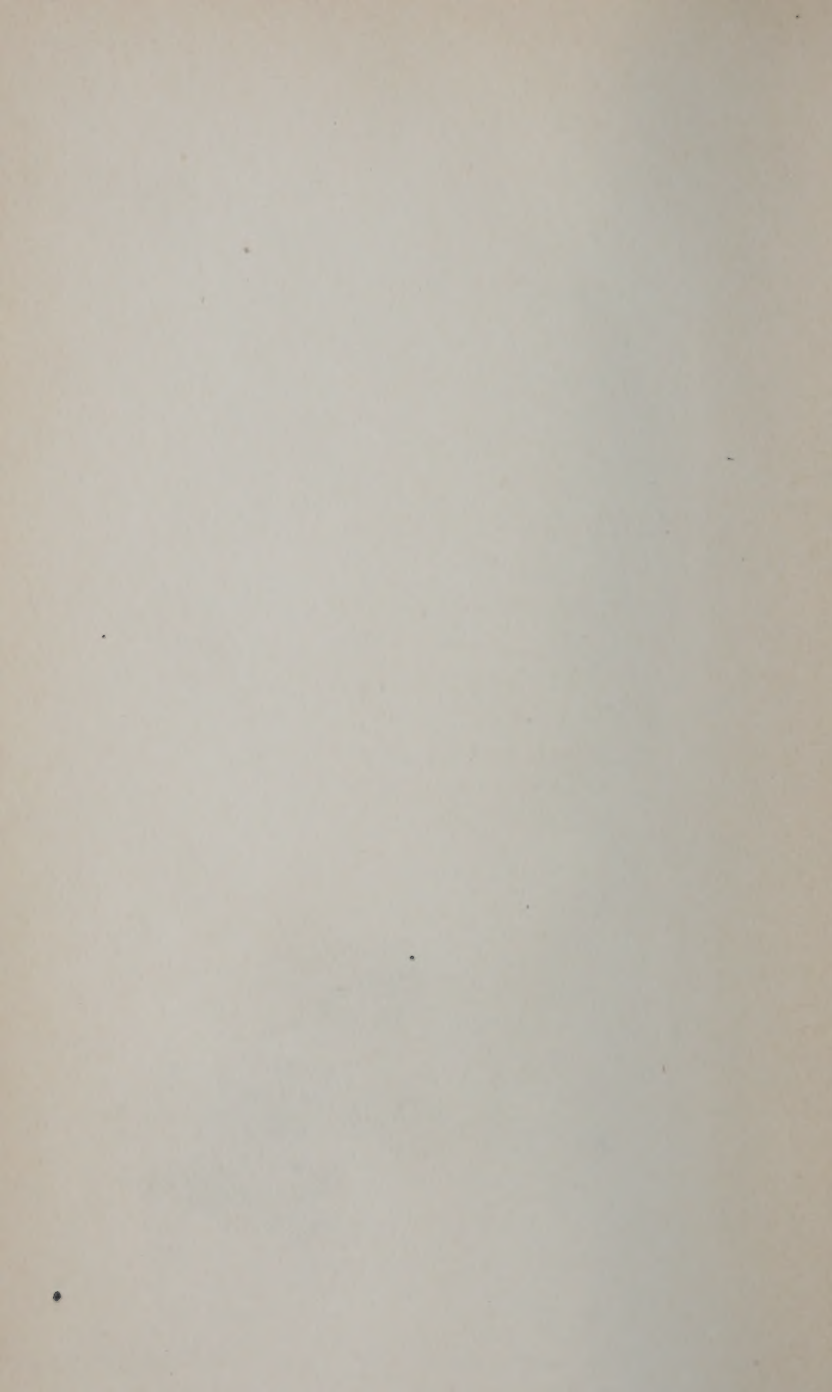






WORKS OF CHARLES DICKENS.

NEW ILLUSTRATED LIBRARY EDITION.

VOLUME XXVIII.

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD,
AND OTHER STORIES.



The Mystery of Edwin Drood.

What are you doing to the man? demands Jasper,
stepping out into the moonlight from the shade.

THE
MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD
AND OTHER STORIES

BY
CHARLES DICKENS

ILLUSTRATED WITH ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY
EDWIN PERCY WHIPPLE



BOSTON
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge

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The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.
Printed by H. O. Houghton & Company.

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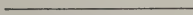
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INTRODUCTION.

BY EDWIN P. WHIPPLE.

THE last number of "Our Mutual Friend" was published in November, 1865. Between that time and the appearance of the first number of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," nearly five years elapsed. With the exception of his contributions to the Christmas supplements of "All the Year Round," Dickens appears, during these years, to have written little, except "George Silverman's Explanation," contributed to "The Atlantic Monthly," published by Fields, Osgood & Co., and "A Holiday Romance," contributed to "Our Young Folks," a juvenile magazine, issued by the same American firm. For the two latter trivialities (as we may relatively style them), Fields, Osgood & Co. paid him a thousand pounds. Some eight years before, he received from Mr. Bonner, of "The New York Ledger," the same amount for the tale of "Hunted Down." In the whole history of literature, there are no other instances of sums so large paid for services so small. "Hunted Down," especially, is a story of the size of an ordinary magazine article, and has no other indication of Dickens's genius than a certain faint reflection of his manner, which George Augustus Sala might easily have mimicked; and yet Bonner paid for it one hundred times the price that Milton's publisher paid for "Paradise Lost," four times the price which Tsonson gave Dryden for the twelve thousand lines of the "Fables" (including Alexander's Feast), and probably much more than Gray, Collins, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats, combined, received for the whole body of their verse. There can be no greater testimony to the value of

a name, won by merit, than such premiums given to performances by no means meritorious.

The popularity of Dickens is, indeed, one of the marvels of literature. His mere name became a good investment for capital. He knew himself the worth of it to the last farthing, as a manufacturer of silks or calicoes knows the worth of a pattern he has invented, and which has become "the rage;" and he traded on his name with a business-like sagacity, compounded of prudence, vigilance, discretion, and foresight, which has rarely been surpassed in any commercial counting-room. Had he lived twenty years longer, his fortune must have rivaled that of some of the great mercantile houses; for his death was occasioned by no disease which touched the inventiveness of his brain, and he was hardly ever in more assured possession of his faculties than while writing, the day before his death, the conclusion of the twenty-third chapter of "Edwin Drood." Even if he should have sparingly indulged in the work of creating new denizens for his vast imaginative domain of Dickens-land, he might, by his Readings, have made from £15,000 to £20,000 a year. There was no limit to his audiences in any country where the English language was spoken; and the desire to see and hear and read him was never greater than at the hour he was suddenly stricken with death. With a few exceptions, his popularity from the start was constantly cumulative, until at last it became quite a moneyed power. This was evident in the contract he made with the publishers of "Edwin Drood." Every poorly paid author glowed with enthusiasm, or paled with envy, when he considered how Dickens contrived to exact from publishers a sum so enormous. At any rate, the dignity of the profession of authorship was exalted by the amount freely given to one of the craft, by the class that authors are wont to look upon as their natural enemies. The terms of the arrangement were, that Dickens was to receive for a novel in twelve monthly parts, — that is, a novel of the size of "Great Expectations," — £7,500, on a sale of 25,000 copies. After that number was reached, publisher and author were to share equally in the prof

ts of the sales ; and, as the circulation reached 50,000 copies the author's gains were greatly increased. He received £1,000 from the United States for the early sheets of the work ; and from Leipzig, Baron Tauchnitz sent a large amount for the privilege of anticipating European reprinters of the new work. On the whole, it may be said that, if he had lived to complete the book, he would have made from £12,000 to £15,000 by it, — an amount much in excess of the price paid to what are usually called popular writers, for the whole body of their works, representing twenty years of constant intellectual activity. Indeed, we can conceive of booksellers watching the ups and downs of Dickens's health, as other speculators might watch the mutations in price of the stock of a railway or manufacturing company.

But before "Edwin Drood" appeared, Dickens revisited the United States for the purpose of giving Readings from his own works. He had been repeatedly solicited to undertake the journey, with assured promises of rich financial results, before the year 1867, when he somewhat hesitatingly consented to make the attempt. He had a feeling that the American people cherished a bitter remembrance of "American Notes," and certain scenes and characters in "Martin Chuzzlewit." He thought that in "the States" he was unpopular as a man, however popular he might be as an author. He sent Mr. Dolby over to view the ground ; and Mr. Dolby returned with confident assurances that the enterprise would succeed ; but neither Dickens nor Dolby dared to anticipate the success which really awaited it. In six months, Dickens received, in gold, over and above all expenses, a sum as large as Abraham Lincoln received, in currency, for his four years' Presidency of the United States ; and poor Mr. Dolby soon became the most unpopular human being in the country, because it was out of his power to make a hall that held two thousand people hold double that number. There was something comical in this inversion of the ordinary relation of the artist to the public. Commonly the trouble is to get an audience ; but in this case there was a con-

INTRODUCTION.

stant struggle and fight going on, as to who should have the privilege, at any expenditure of money, to be one of the audience. The price of admission was very high, — twice the price paid to witness the performances of Rachel or Ristori; but the difficulty was not in the price, but in getting admission at any price. The speculators in tickets reaped a rich reward. It was impossible for Dolby to prevent them from plundering the public. "First come, first served," was a maxim found to entail cruel injustice, as the speculators were willing to take half or all the tickets for each evening, if they could succeed, by encamping over night at the door of the ticket office, in being in the foremost line of the grand rush in the morning. Then it was decided that no more than six tickets should be sold to one person; but the speculators easily adapted themselves to this rule, by posting some fifty brawny fellows as near the doors as they could be packed. In a few cases, tickets were sold for fifty dollars; twenty dollars was a common charge; and yet a considerable minority of the insatiable public, eager to get sight of the great man at any cost, were disappointed. All those who paid extortionate prices for tickets, and all who failed of getting tickets at any price, joined in cursing Mr. Dolby as the one visible object on whom their rage might be discharged. His commission on the regular receipts of all the Readings was £2,888; and certainly he earned more than that sum, if we merely compute what an honest man should properly charge for being privately and publicly denounced as a rogue and a ruffian, during a period, in Mr. Micawber's phrase, "of six calendar months." In addition to the inevitable unpleasant consequences arising from his being the keeper of the great literary lion, and made responsible for the difficulty of supplying seats for five thousand applicants in halls which could hold only fifteen hundred, he was bitterly assailed by certain newspapers because he had not sent them advertisements of the Readings, even after he had received notice that the said advertisements would open the editorial columns of the journals to such paragraphs as Dolby might consider judicious to insert. Dickens

notices that an item appeared in the editorial columns of one of the rejected newspapers to this effect: "This chap, calling himself Dolby, got drunk down town last night, and was taken to the police station for fighting an Irishman." Indeed, the rage against the innocent Dolby, guilty only of being the business agent of a man whom everybody desired to hear, but who could be heard only by a fraction of "everybody," at last passed into a subject on which hundreds of editors exercised their disciplined capacity for jocose sarcasm, raillery, and abuse. The whole vast joke culminated when Dickens read in Washington. There was the usual fight for tickets of admission, and the usual disappointments in securing seats. The excluded members of the Senate and the House of Representatives met, it was said, in secret session. Everything uttered in that assemblage of dignitaries, — that is, those legislators of the United States who had failed to obtain tickets to hear Dickens read the "Christmas Carol," "Boots at the Holly Tree Inn," and "Bob Sawyer's Party," — was protected from report by the usual methods which shut out from the public the terrible determinations of these august personages, when they are constitutionally withdrawn from the public eye. As usual, some newspaper correspondent, disguised as a Senator or Representative, was in the conclave; and he revealed to the "New York Herald," or the "Tribune," the result of its deliberations. He, of course, preserved a certain reserve in announcing the decision, which was the result of their secret debate, as it seemed to threaten the stability of the peace between two nations, bound together by community of language and race, by a common brotherhood in Shakespeare, Milton, Newton, and Locke, and by all those other ties of kindred, about which orators have bored us so pitilessly that they have almost converted them into justifiable grounds of deadly enmity. The result, however, though obscurely stated, amounted to this: That, in any treaty hereafter made with Great Britain, the inhabitants of the United States would cordially shake hands with the inhabitants of the British Empire, with one marked exception. The government of the United

States could forgive and forget everything, with the single exception of the outrages committed by one Englishman, who should be banished from the pale of civilization, and be forever accursed. The name of this person was Dolby : —

“ Letters Five do form his name ! ”

Dickens was amazed, not merely by the overwhelming tribute to his genius as an impersonator of his own characters, but by the general compliance with his wish that his privacy should not be disturbed by importunate callers, eager to bore him with attentions which would have robbed him of his time, and interfered with his precautions to preserve his health. He passed through the country, which was resounding with his name, as safe from the intrusion of impulsive admiration or impertinent curiosity, as though he had been only an ordinary English gentleman. We hardly can bring to mind another instance of such immense publicity combined with all the advantages of that seclusion which is the privilege of unnoted private life.

Dickens's letters to his friends and family in England are mostly filled with accounts of his pecuniary successes. Every Bostonian must remember the freezing November morning when the approaches to the publishing house of Fields, Osgood & Co. were obstructed by the long lane of persons anxious to obtain tickets ; and many a Bostonian must also date an incurable disease of the lungs as the result of patient waiting for his turn to expend his money. A New York wit renamed the city Boz-town. Dickens wrote, on November 21st : “ An immense train of people waited in the freezing street for twelve hours, and passed into the office in their turns, as at a French theatre. The receipts already taken for these (four) nights exceed our calculation by more than £250.” On the 2d of December, 1867, he read in “ Boz-town ” for the first time in the United States. His subjects were the “ Christmas Carol ” and “ The Trial from Pickwick.” His reception was all that he could have desired. When, in the “ Trial ” scene, Samuel Weller was called to the witness stand, there broke forth a roar of ap

plause which indicated both the popularity of that gentleman, and the familiarity of the audience with all his sayings and doings. On the next morning he wrote to Forster: "It is really impossible for me to exaggerate the magnificence of the reception or the effect of the reading. The whole city will talk of nothing else and hear of nothing else to-day. . . . At the decreased rate of money even, we had £450 English in the house last night." In New York there was a similar enthusiasm. At two in the morning there was a small crowd before the ticket office; at five o'clock it had increased to eight hundred; at eight, to five thousand; at nine, there were two lines of purchasers, each three quarters of a mile in length. Five or ten dollars were offered "for the mere permission to exchange places with other persons standing nearer the head of the line." The profits each night of the Readings in New York exceeded the estimate by the sum of £130. Before the end of December he remitted £3,000 to England. But the climate was beginning to tell upon him. He was afflicted with a severe catarrh, and during the last four months of his journeyings in the country he could hardly be said to pass a day in good health. His indomitable will, however, bore him up under all discouragement: though he could not restrain certain explosions of feeling when things went wrong; for it is a common experience that the stronger the will, when it works under adverse circumstances, the more irritable becomes the temper, especially when illness as well as all kinds of external obstructions are to be overcome. We do not, on the whole, envy the position of anybody who was on Dickens's "staff," while he was perambulating the country. Floods and storms, which had no respect for the novelist, impeded occasionally the roads on which he traveled; and, as the loss of an engagement was equivalent to the loss of three or four hundred pounds, he must have felt more than an ordinary lecturer's irritable uneasiness at inevitable delays in railroad travel, and have visited on his "staff" the vexation which should properly have been expended on imperfinent snow-storms and insolent floods. Had Dickens gone to South America, and been

interrupted in his progress by an earthquake, which destroyed the population to which he was hastening to read, he would have felt a similar irritation, and expended it, not on Nature, but on such specimens of human nature as happened to surround him at the time, and to be interested in his punctual appearance in the city at the hour when it was wrecked by the lifting of the earth, or submerged by a tidal wave.

Dickens's letters from the United States, as we have said already, were mostly confined to a record of the enormous receipts of his Readings. He was careful to remit everything he gained to England, distrusting equally all American securities and insecurities, — even the securities of the government. Had he invested his earnings in United States Bonds he would have made at least £5,000 more than he did by placing them in the English funds. He sympathized with Sir William Scott in his liking for “the elegant simplicity of the three per cents.” He preferred this elegant simplicity to everything that our country could offer in town, city, state, railway, or government bonds. Indeed, he seemed impatient to realize his gains as fast as possible in English money, though the premium on gold was forty per cent. He appeared to think that nothing was stable in the currency or capital of the country, and that a week's lapse in remitting to London would reduce his seeming receipts a fourth or a fifth. He might have been excused for distrusting all the evidences of wealth that met his eyes in our great cities and manufacturing towns; but it is singular that he should have been skeptical as to the ability of the United States government to meet its obligations, when he found its citizens possessing sufficient surplus income to pay extortionate prices for the privilege of seeing and hearing him.

It is curious to observe how obtuse Dickens was in reference to the fact, that Great Britain would not pay a fifth, or at least a third, of the amount which he received in the United States. The Chappells began with paying him, clear of all expenses, £50 a night. This was increased to £60 before he entered on his American enterprise; and after he returned from that most

triumphant of ovations, they only paid him £80 a night for a series of seventy-five Readings. Had he consented to stay in this country, there can be no doubt that the American public would have paid £20,000 for what, in Great Britain, he received only £6,000. The great cities of the Western States he did not visit at all; and one despairs to estimate what might have been his gains in California. After having, in the mere flush of his American popularity, returned, or rather escaped, to England, in the first week of May, 1868, he stated the expenses and profits of his six months' tour in a remarkable letter to Forster. Dolby's commission was about £2,888; Ticknor & Fields had a commission of £1,000 (paid for by "George Silverman's Explanation" and "A Holiday Romance"), besides five per cent. on all Boston receipts. "The expenses in America to the day of our sailing were £13,000. The preliminary expenses were £614. The average price of gold was nearly 40 per cent., and yet my profit was within a hundred or so of £20,000. Supposing me to have got through the present engagement in good health, I shall have made by the Readings in two years, £33,000; that is to say, £13,000 received from the Chappells, and £20,000 from America." According to this statement, he made £7,000 more by reading six months in the United States, than by reading eighteen months in Great Britain.

Apart from his audiences, Dickens saw little in his second visit to the United States. The scholars of Cambridge, Boston, and New York were mostly old friends. He loved Longfellow, of course, because nobody, whether Englishman or American, could meet him without loving him. Agassiz, the great naturalist, he met for the first time, and was magnetized by him as all persons, gentle or simple, educated or ignorant, were magnetized the moment they came into his presence. He perceived at once that Agassiz had a richness of nature which was nearly as remarkable as his intellectual scope and power, and he regretted every obstruction which prevented his forming a more intimate acquaintance with that wonderful creature, whose manners were as cordial as his knowledge was vast, and who seemed to hide his greatness in his geniality.

Two things must unpleasantly impress every American reader of Dickens's private letters to his English friends, during his second visit to the United States. The first is his contempt for the government, though it had recently put a million of men into the field to crush the most formidable of all rebellions. The second is, his strange forgetfulness of all his anti-slavery enthusiasm, as he witnessed the struggle to endow the emancipated slave with his true liberty-preserver, the right of suffrage.

As to the first, he showed no appreciation of the heroism and sacrifices, either of the North or the South. His judgment of the government was expressed in a letter to Forster, dated January 14, 1868, and written from Philadelphia. "I see," he says, "great changes for the better, socially. Politically, no. England governed by the Marylebone vestry and the penny papers, and England as she would be after years of such governing, is what I make of *that*." This is his fleering notice of a government which had power enough to make a wholesale conscription of the persons as well as the property of its citizens, during four years of desolating war, and which never flinched until its authority was recognized over every acre of its vast domain of over 3,000,000 of square miles. The English government has not power enough to venture on such a conscription. It is to be said, however, as some apology for Dickens's oversight, that he was more disposed to satirize than to praise his own government. In a speech at Birmingham, after his return from the United States, he said: "My faith in the people governing is, on the whole, infinitesimal; my faith in the People governed is, on the whole, illimitable." When this was construed to mean that he had small belief in the capacity of the people to govern themselves, he explained that he meant to say that he had very little confidence in the people who govern us ('with a small p'), and great confidence in the People whom they govern ('with a large P'). He seemed to have small respect for any English statesman of his time with the exception of Lord John Russell.

As to the second point, he did after his kind. In his "American Notes," he made a fierce attack on the slave system of the

country. The slavery of the African negro was doubtless a crime, which properly exposed the great Republic to the anathemas of the philanthropy of the Christian world. Well, that stain was washed out in copious libations of the best blood drawn from the veins of white citizens, both of the North and the South. The armies of the government necessarily made slavery impossible in any tract of country they occupied; but no prominent liberal English author, like Tennyson or Dickens, no prominent English liberal statesman, like Gladstone or Lord John Russell, wished the American government God speed in its work. The war ended with the complete emancipation of the slaves; and then the majority of American statesmen and legislators considered that the blacks could be protected in their new-born rights only by giving them the suffrage. Dickens appeared in the country at the time when radical republicans like Charles Sumner, and conservative republicans like William Pitt Fessenden, were united in sustaining a scheme of Reconstruction which gave to the negroes the right of voting. Statesmen were debating whether this would be wrong or right, politic or impolitic; but Dickens looked upon the contest as a sentimentalist. The thick-lipped negro, with his supposed radiation of offensive smells, was, as long as he continued a slave, a person around whom all the benevolence of Great Britain should rally, and damn to everlasting perdition the government that held him as a bondman. The moment he was free, another class of scents and sentiments came into play; and Dickens, in his second visit to the United States, became quite a convert to negrophobia, and joined in with the polite persons who were quite sure that no emancipated slave could be an intelligent voter. So he writes to Forster: "At Baltimore I had a charming little theatre, and a very apprehensive, impulsive audience. It is remarkable to see how the Ghost of Slavery haunts the town; and how the shambling, untidy, evasive, and postponing Irrepressible proceeds about his free work, going round and round it instead of at it. The melancholy absurdity of giving these people votes, at any rate at present, would glare at one out of every

roll of their eyes, chuckle in their mouths, and bump in their heads, if one did not see (as one cannot help seeing in the country) that their enfranchisement is a mere trick to get votes." If this judgment of the negro be compared with the author's assault on the Circumlocution Office, it will be found that the free African, going round and round his work without doing it, was merely copying Lord Palmerston, or Earl Derby, in his performance of his public duty; and that the waiter at the Baltimore Hotel was striving "How Not to Do It" after illustrious examples, and was as worthy of being a political power as were those illustrious noblemen. But Dickens goes on: "When I read in Mr. Beecher's church at Brooklyn, we found the trustees had suppressed the fact that a certain upper gallery holding one hundred and fifty was the 'Colored Gallery.' On the first night not a soul could be induced to enter it; and it was not until it became known next day that I was certainly not going to read there more than four times, that we managed to fill it. One night at New York, on our second or third row, there were two well-dressed women with a tinge of color, — I should say, not even quadroons. But the holder of one ticket, who found his seat to be next to them, demanded of Dolby, 'what he meant by fixing him next to those two Gord darned cusses of niggers?' and insisted on being supplied with another place. Dolby firmly replied that he was perfectly certain Mr. Dickens would not recognize such an objection on any account, but he could have his money back, if he chose, — which, after some squabbling, he had. In a comic scene in the New York circus one night, when I was looking on, four white people sat down upon a form in a barber's shop to be shaved. A colored man came as the fifth customer, and the four immediately ran away. This was much laughed at and applauded. In the Baltimore penitentiary, the white prisoners dine on one side of the room, the colored prisoners on the other: and no one has the slightest idea of mixing them. But it is indubitably the fact that exhalations not the most agreeable arise from a number of colored people put together, and I was obliged to beat a quick retreat from their dormitory. I strongly

believe that they will die out of this country fast. It seems, looking at them, so manifestly absurd to suppose that they can ever hold their own against a restless, shifty, striving, stronger race."

Every reader will readily perceive how foolish it was, on Dickens's principles, to emancipate a race doomed to swift extinction. When he first came to the country, the down-trodden slave was the most interesting object for a philanthropist to regard; when, after an absence of twenty-five years, he returned to the country, the uprisen slave was a freeman to be despised, because he was ugly in face, smelt badly, and could not keep his own in the free struggle of white race with black race. Ignoring the fact that, in looking over the whole country, the Irish and the blacks appear to have the greatest power of continuing their species on this portion of the planet, there is something specially exasperating in a humane romancer, who taunts us with disregarding the rights of humanity in 1842, and then, in 1868, after we have spent nearly a million of lives and some five billions of treasure in an attempt to accommodate ourselves to his philanthropic ideas, sneers at us for attempting to elevate a race which he jauntily dooms to sure extinction.

But let us leave such questions as these. The great value of Dickens's Readings was the proof they afforded that his leading characters were not caricatures. His illustrators, especially Cruikshank, made them often appear to be caricatures, by exaggerating their external oddities of feature or eccentricities of costume, rather than by seeking to represent their internal life; and the reader became accustomed to turn to the rough picture of the person as though the author's deep humorous conception of the character was embodied in the artist's hasty and superficial sketch. As it was thought that serial publications must be illustrated, in order to add to their popularity, and as Dickens began *Pickwick* only with the idea of writing a prose commentary on Seymour's pictures, he drifted into the habit of engaging an artist to supply illustrations for each of his serial novels. There was no possible field offered for the sketcher really to interpret the author's text, and the text was often withheld to the last

moment. Dickens himself relied on the printed, and not on the pictorial, representations of the characters, to convey his conceptions. The pictures were thrown in, as an indispensable element in the business speculation of giving the book the widest possible circulation. When the reader looked to the illustration he supposed that, as the author had allowed it to be inserted in his novel, its vices of distortion and grotesqueness corresponded to the same qualities in Dickens's mind. This notion was dispelled the moment he witnessed the creator of the characters undertake to impersonate them — when he saw him visibly transform himself into Scrooge or Squeers, Sam Weller or Bob Sawyer, Tiny Tim or Paul Dombey, Mr. Micawber or Mr. Peggotty, Betsy Prig or Mrs. Gamp, John Brodie or Boots at the Inn, Miss Squeers or Tilda Price. The characters then seemed, not only all alive, but full of individual life; and, however odd, eccentric, unpleasing, or strange, they always appeared to be natural, always appeared to be personal natures rooted in human nature. He was indeed a very great actor; and when the personages assumed were his own creations, he was at times a marvelous actor, appearing to have as many faces and voices as he had individuals to represent. His Squeers was one of his masterpieces. The voice he gave to that eminent teacher of youth seemed to be a pure invention, with tones that had never been heard before in the civilized world; but a few months after hearing it, I happened to be in a little western public house beyond the Mississippi, and my surprise was great when the landlord thereof accosted me in the same voice which had astounded me in listening to Dickens's Squeers. There is probably no other instance in literature of such a power of creating characters combined with such a power of impersonating them, as we find in the case of Dickens.

Dickens left the United States for his English home in ill health, but the sea voyage appeared to benefit him. He arrived in the first week of May, 1868. Before he had completed his first American Readings in Boston, he had engaged with the Chappells to give a hundred Readings on his return to Grea

Britain for £8,000. He began them in October, 1868, adding in January, 1869, to his ordinary Reading list, the terrible scene from "Oliver Twist," where Sikes murders Nancy. This melo-dramatic occurrence was given with such melo-dramatic power that it occasioned what he called a "contagion of fainting" among the female portion of his auditors. "At Clifton," he wrote to his daughter, "I should think we had from a dozen to twenty ladies taken out stiff and rigid, at various times! It became quite ridiculous." Indeed, though the scene was wonderfully realized to the senses and the feelings of his audiences, this reading must have been essentially coarse in its power, even though Macready, then in his dotage, declared that the "Murder was two Macbeths." It is not the business of an artist to represent a murder in such a way as to make his auditors feel that they are looking on a brutal housebreaker killing his mistress. The faintings were "ridiculous," because it is not the purpose of the actor's art to produce faintings or convulsion fits, and his power is not to be estimated by the number of women carried out of the theatre "stiff and rigid" in the course of each performance. Then the unusual exertion required in reading the scenes from "Oliver Twist" was one, among other causes, of Dickens's premature death. In reading other portions of his works, his pulse sometimes went up very high; but the Sykes and Nancy scenes often carried it to 120. He suffered himself in making others suffer; and his sufferings as well as theirs were, in Hamlet's phrase, "from the purpose" of acting.

The chief cause of his death, however, was general overwork. His physicians warned him in vain, that the pain in his feet was not a merely local trouble; that the dizziness in his head, and the strange affection of his eyes by which he could read only the halves of letters over the shop doors, that were on his right, as he looked, were not the results of taking medicine; and that his "weakness and deadness on the left side" were hints of impending paralysis. His will bore him up to the last, in struggling against symptoms to which a less resolute

man would have at once very properly succumbed. It is needless to add that the money which was pouring in upon him as the reward of his painful labors, was not regarded as a means for future self-indulgence, but as a treasure which would enable his family of children to have a fair start in life, with something to depend upon in case they failed in their first ventures. He gave up his own life in order that their lives might be made easier and happier than his own. If there was any taint of selfishness in his generous and genial nature, it was that form of the quality which urges men to have their own benevolent way, and work out the resolves of their own well-intentioned will, regardless of the advice of others who are better qualified to give an impersonal judgment on the circumstances of each case. As it was, however, he is distinguished from all other eminent authors in this, that he left, as the result of his own exertions, a large fortune to his family. His real and personal property at the time of his death was estimated, and probably under-estimated, at £93,000.

Meanwhile the end was approaching. In March, 1870, a hemorrhage, which had sometimes troubled him in his early life, returned in an aggravated form. On the 7th of May he read to Forster and other friends the fifth number of "Edwin Drood," and seemed in excellent spirits. Ten days after he was to attend the Queen's ball with his daughter; but on the day before the ball he wrote to Forster: "I am sorry to report, that, in the old preposterous endeavor to dine at preposterous hours and in preposterous places, I have been pulled at by a sharp attack in my foot. And serve me right. I hope to get the better of it soon, but I fear I must not think of dining with you on Friday. I have canceled everything in the dining way for this week, and that is a very small precaution after the horrible pain I have had and the remedies I have taken." On the 30th he left London for Gadshill, with his foot no better but with a determination to avoid all invitations, and devote his time to "Edwin Drood." "On the 8th of June," says Forster "he passed all the day writing in the Chalet. He came over

for luncheon, and, much against his usual custom, returned to his desk. Of the sentences he was then writing, the last of his long life of literature, . . . the reader will observe the direction his thoughts had taken. He imagines such a brilliant morning as had risen, with the 8th of June shining on the old city of Rochester. He sees in surpassing beauty, with the lusty ivy gleaming in the sun, and the rich trees waving in the balmy air, its antiquities, and its ruins; its Cathedral and Castle. But his fancy, then, is not with the stern dead forms of either; but with that which makes warm the cold stone tombs of centuries, and lights them up with flecks of brightness, 'fluttering there like wings.' To him, on that sunny summer morning, the changes of glorious light from moving boughs, the songs of birds, the scents from garden, woods, and fields, have penetrated into the Cathedral, have subdued its earthy odor, and are preaching the Resurrection and the Life."

He continued that day to write on the twenty-third chapter of "Edwin Drood" up to the final sentence where it now concludes, with Mr. Datchery's adding a thick chalk-line to his score of hieroglyphics against Mr. Jasper, and then falling to his breakfast "with an appetite." Dinner was ordered at the house at six o'clock; and Dickens left the Châlet only in time to write a few letters, — one of which was to make an appointment in London for the next day, — before it was announced. It is curious that such words, "with an appetite," should have ushered in such a dinner as followed. He had been seated at the table only a few minutes before Miss Hogarth "saw, with alarm, a singular expression of trouble and pain in his face. For an hour, he then told her, he had been very ill; but he wished dinner to go on. These were the only really coherent words uttered by him. They were followed by some, that fell from him disconnectedly, of quite other matters; of an approaching sale at a neighbor's house, of whether Macready's son was with his father at Cheltenham, and of his own intention to go immediately to London; but at these latter he had risen, and his sister-in-law's help alone prevented him from falling

where he stood. Her effort then was to get him on the sofa, but after a slight struggle he sank heavily on his left side. 'On the ground' were the last words he spoke. It was now a little over ten minutes past six o'clock. . . . All possible medical aid had been summoned. But all human help was unavailing. There was effusion on the brain; and though stertorous breathing continued all night, and until ten minutes past six o'clock on the evening of Thursday, the 9th of June, there had never been a gleam of hope during the twenty-four hours. He had lived four months beyond his fifty-eighth year."

The news of his death, as it flashed over the globe, may be said to have been felt as a calamity, not only by the English, but the human race. Everybody had an interest in the continuance of that rich and abounding life; everybody experienced a pang of grieved surprise that that large heart had ceased to beat, and that creative brain had ceased to imagine. As in the cases of Macaulay and Thackeray, whose death in the fullness of their powers had been as sudden and painless as his own, the public had a realizing sense of the fact that a peculiar power had passed away from the earth which could not be exactly replaced by anything that remained upon it. The general feeling in Great Britain was that the only fit burial place for the mortal frame of such an immortal genius was Westminster Abbey. In his lifetime, he repeatedly expressed the desire that after his death his body should be hid away in some quiet grave-yard, far from the public eye; and in his will are these words: "I emphatically direct that I be buried in an inexpensive, unostentatious, and strictly private manner; that no public announcement be made of the time or place of my burial; that at the utmost not more than three plain mourning coaches be employed; and that those who attend my funeral wear no scarf, cloak, black bow, long hat-band, or *other such revolting absurdity*. I direct that my name be inscribed in plain English letters on my tomb, without the addition of 'Mr. or 'Esquire.' I conjure my friends on no account to make me the subject of any monument, memorial, or testimonial what

over. I rest my claims to the remembrance of my country upon my published works, and to the remembrance of my friends upon their experience of me in addition thereto." The "revolting absurdity" which he thus stigmatizes, in reference to the accredited marks of mourning, he had exposed in his representations of such professional getters up of elegant funerals as the waggish Mr. Mould, in "Martin Chuzzlewit," and the jocose Mr. Omer, in "David Copperfield," and he was determined that his own body, after he had left it, should not be desecrated by such ridiculous observances. His injunctions as to privacy being observed, he was buried, on Tuesday, the 14th of June, with the knowledge only of those who took part in the ceremony, in Westminster Abbey, in a spot which the Dean of Westminster had selected. "The solemnity," says Forster, "was not lost by the simplicity. Nothing so grand or so touching could have accompanied it, as the stillness and silence of the vast Cathedral. Then later in the day, and all the following day, came unbidden mourners in such crowds, that the Dean had to request permission to keep open the grave until Thursday; but after it was closed they did not cease to come, and 'all day long,' Dr. Stanley wrote on the 17th, 'there was a constant pressure to the spot, and many flowers were strewn upon it by unknown hands, many tears shed from unknown eyes.'" . . . The stone placed upon it is simply inscribed, —

CHARLES DICKENS.

BORN FEBRUARY THE SEVENTH, 1812. DIED JUNE THE NINTH, 1870.

"I hope his book is finished," Longfellow wrote to Forster, when he received the intelligence of Dickens's death; "it is certainly one of his most beautiful works, if not the most beautiful of all. It would be sad to think the pen had fallen from his hand, and left it incomplete." Indeed, since he who

"Left half told,
The story of Cambuscan bold,"

there is no unfinished work of romance which has so attracted and so puzzled critical curiosity as this "Mystery" of Edwin Drood. We all know, or think we know, that Drood was murdered, and murdered by his uncle Jasper, but the means and method of the murder still remain obscure. At last, in response to this laudable curiosity, spiritual communication was seemingly obtained with the soul of Dickens, and he was so considerate as to dictate the remaining chapters through a spiritual medium; but, alas! it was an impostor who got hold of the somnolent scribe, and what he reported of the pretended Charles Dickens was nothing more than this, that if spiritualism be true, hoaxing the public is as favorite an amusement in the sphere immediately beyond the grave as it is on this side of it; or, at best, that spirits altogether lose their genius the moment they leave the body which is here ignorantly supposed to limit its scope.

If Dickens could have lived to note the confession of Jasper, as, in his opium sleep, he described the way in which he murdered his nephew, and disposed of his body, we doubtless should have had all our queries answered, and should also have been furnished with an additional example of his power of psychological analysis in detailing the movements, and representing the states, of exceptionally criminal souls. Jasper is altogether the most original of his villains.

Mr. Forster tells us that Dickens's first idea was to make the main interest of the romance depend on such a relation as that established between Rosa and Edwin Drood, which now remains as an incident of secondary importance. In August, 1869, Dickens wrote: "I laid aside the fancy I told you of, and have a very curious and new idea for my new story. Not a communicable idea (or the interest of the book would be gone), but a very strong one, though difficult to work." Forster afterwards learned that the story was to be the murder of a nephew by his uncle, "the originality of which was to consist in the review of the murderer's career by himself at the close, when the temptations were to be dwelt upon as if, not he the cul

prit, but some other man were the culprit. The last chapters were to be written in the condemned cell, to which his wickedness, all elaborately elicited from him as if told of another, had brought him. Discovery by the murderer of the utter needlessness of the murder for its object, was to follow hard upon the commission of the deed; but all discovery of the murderer was to be baffled till towards the close, when, by means of a gold ring which had resisted the corrosive effects of the lime into which he had thrown the body, not only the person murdered was to be identified, but the locality of the crime and the man who committed it. So much was told to me before the book was written."

Dickens evidently brought into the story, as he afterwards wrote it, many elements of interest that he had not mentioned to Forster. Jasper, the uncle, is represented as an artistic voluptuary, who is disgusted with the humdrum of his life as the leader of a Cathedral choir in a provincial city, and who indulges in the wildest dreams of love and power that the lavish use of opium can excite. His moral sense, as is usually the case with opium eaters and smokers, is entirely destroyed, so far as it operates to restrain him from criminal acts. He falls madly in love with the girl who is betrothed to his nephew, and coolly determines to murder the latter, simply as an obstacle to the gratification of his desires. The hag who keeps the opium den, to which he resorts for the supreme indulgence of his habit, notices that, in his disturbed sleep, he enacts, in imagination, some crime which he aches practically to commit. Her suspicions are aroused; and she hopes to gain some profit by watching her customer, and tracing him to his home. Her first attempt fails. She follows him to Cloisterham without discovering his name or residence. On the fatal evening when Edwin Drood passes into his uncle's house, she accosts him as a beggar, receives the sum she asks for, inquires his name, and tells him to be thankful that it is not "Ned," as that is a threatened name. She has heard it in Jasper's ravings, and knows that he who holds it is doomed. In her second visit to Cloisterham she

into ordinary conversation the smiting invective which Cicero reserved for Verres, and Burke for Hastings. We have only the half of him, and must mourn over the loss of the other half with a grief that refuses to be comforted. Mr. Bazzard-Datchery, also, after promising to be as notable a personage as the Mr. Bucket of "Bleak House," is rubbed out as swiftly as one might erase his last triumphant chalk-mark on Mrs. Tope's cupboard door.

It would seem that Dickens must have caught the first idea of the Rev. Mr. Crisparkle, Minor Canon, from the character of Charles Kingsley, differing as he does with the latter in so many respects. It is rare that we meet, either in literature or in life, a person who gives the impression of perfect physical purity; and Mr. Crisparkle is such a paragon, with a moral health corresponding to his physical perfection, so that, whenever he appears in the book, it seems as if he had just emerged from a plunge into cold, running water, and had on him the pure and cheerful glow which such a plunge produces in all vigorous constitutions, and had also on him the additional glow which indicates that the bath had been a baptism. The influence of his wholesome character radiates from him unconsciously, so that Neville Landless and his sister, whose willfulness had increased with every utterance of Mr. Honeythunder's sonorous, ethical eloquence, are tamed by a single look from his eye or a simple word from his mouth. He, also, is a man whom the reader parts with reluctantly.

Mr. Sapsea is the most portentous of all the author's delineations of solemn human asses. His conceit is as colossal as his stupidity. The inscription on Mrs. Sapsea's monument is probably the most audacious of the many strokes of Dickens's extravagant humor, it being a masterpiece of absurdity, self-importance, and self-delusion. The account which Mr. Sapsea gives of his wooing of Miss Brobity ranks next to it in comic extravagance. As Mr. Sapsea is a donkey, positive and confessed, whose ears become prominent every time he opens his mouth, it is a mistake in art for Dickens to make Jasper, or

the occasion of the disappearance of Edwin Drood, pay such deference to the opinions of one whom every intelligent person who is present knows to be the very impersonation of blunder-headedness, — the prince of dunces, —

“Owned, without dispute,
Throughout the realms of nonsense absolute.”

Among the many precocious urchins that Dickens has created, the most wonderful is the hideous small boy of this romance, named “Deputy.” He is not merely one of the young savages which civilization breeds in its dark corners, but there is something demoniacal in him. Jasper calls him a “baby-devil;” and certainly if Satan is, in colloquial speech, justly though irreverently styled the “Old Boy,” this imp of darkness deserves the title of the “Young Boy.” He promises to do credit to the elder personage from whom he traces his descent; and one wonders what Dickens would have done with him at the end. As Mrs. Todgers says of Bailey, Junior, we fear that “nothing but hanging could have done him any good.”

There are two young women in this unfinished romance whose development is interrupted at the moment they become most interesting. Helena Landless, we cannot help thinking, would have turned out to be one of Dickens’s best feminine characterizations. Rosa Bud is as delightful as Dora, in “David Copperfield,” with the additional recommendation of being capable of growth in mind and character. She is the darling of Miss Twinkleton’s educational establishment, — the crown rose-bud in that “rose-bud garden of girls.” The other maidens, indeed, gather about this beautiful little creature, cooing like doves and chattering like magpies; and the bright, giddy, innocent, affectionate girl makes herself all the more loved by protesting her unworthiness of such devotion, and declaring that she “is such a mite of a thing” that she wonders anybody can think her worth noticing at all. But she palpably grows during the few months we are blessed with her acquaintance. Everybody loves her; and Jasper loves her madly, with such passionate madness that he is determined to destroy everybody who interposes be-

tween him and the possession of his object. Neville Landless secretly loves her; and this betrays him into the quarrel with Edwin Drood, which fixes on him the suspicion of being Edwin's murderer. Meanwhile her own giddy, guileless, affectionate heart is untouched by passion, until she meets the brave naval officer who is to be her future husband. As she walks with him, she thinks that "his far-seeing blue eyes looked as if they had been used to watch danger afar off, and to watch it, without flinching, drawing nearer and nearer. When happening to raise her own eyes, she found that he seemed to be thinking something about them." This is the dawn of a passion, the progress of which we can only conjecture; and we leave Rosa, as we leave the rest of the characters, at the point when she promises to gain more and more on our interest.

We owe to Mr. Forster the discovery of an additional scene to this novel, which Dickens evidently intended to use shortly after the chapter with which the work now unfortunately ends. The passage, with Mr. Forster's preliminary remarks, is subjoined: —

"Within the leaves of one of Dickens's manuscripts were found some detached slips of his writing, on paper only half the size of that used for the tale, so cramped, interlined, and blotted as to be nearly illegible, which on close inspection proved to be a scene in which Sapsea the auctioneer is introduced as the principal figure, among a group of characters new to the story. The explanation of it perhaps is, that, having become a little nervous about the course of the tale, from a fear that he might have plunged too soon into the incidents leading on to the catastrophe, such as the Datchery assumption in the fifth number (a misgiving he had certainly expressed to his sister-in-law), it had occurred to him to open some fresh veins of character incidental to the interest, though not directly part of it, and so to handle them in connection with Sapsea as a little to suspend the final development even while assisting to strengthen it. Before beginning any number of a serial he used, as we have seen in former instances, to plan briefly what he intended to put into it chapter by chapter; and his first number-plan

of *Drood* had the following: 'Mr. Sapsea. Old Tory jackass. Connect Jasper with him. (He will want a solemn donkey by-and-by):' which was effected by bringing together both Durdles and Jasper, for connection with Sapsea, in the matter of the epitaph for Mrs. Sapsea's tomb. The scene now discovered might in this view have been designed to strengthen and carry forward that element in the tale; and otherwise it very sufficiently expresses itself. It would supply an answer, if such were needed, to those who have asserted that the hopeless decadence of Dickens as a writer had set in before his death. Among the lines last written by him, these are the very last we can ever hope to receive; and they seem to me a delightful specimen of the power possessed by him in his prime, and the rarest which any novelist can have, of revealing a character by a touch. Here are a couple of people, Kimber and Peartree, not known to us before, whom we read off thoroughly in a dozen words; and as to Sapsea himself, auctioneer and mayor of Cloisterham, we are face to face with what before we only dimly realized, and we see the solemn jackass, in his business pulpit, playing off the airs of Mr. Dean in his Cathedral pulpit, with Cloisterham laughing at the impostor.

"HOW MR. SAPSEA CEASED TO BE A MEMBER OF THE EIGHT CLUB.

"TOLD BY HIMSELF.

"Wishing to take the air, I proceeded by a circuitous route to the Club, it being our weekly night of meeting. I found that we mustered our full strength. We were enrolled under the denomination of the Eight Club. We were eight in number; we met at eight o'clock during eight months of the year; we played eight games of four-handed cribbage, at eightpence the game; our frugal supper was composed of eight rolls, eight mutton chops, eight pork sausages, eight baked potatoes, eight marrow-bones, with eight toasts, and eight bottles of ale. There may, or may not, be a certain harmony of color in the ruling idea of this (to adopt a phrase of our lively neighbors) reunion. It was a little idea of mine.

"A somewhat popular member of the Eight Club was a member by the name of Kimber. By profession, a dancing-master. A commonplace, hopeful sort of man, wholly destitute of dignity or knowledge of the world.

“As I entered the Club-room, Kimber was making the remark ‘And he still half believes him to be very high in the Church.’

“In the act in hanging up my hat on the eighth peg by the door, I caught Kimber’s visual ray. He lowered it, and passed a remark on the next change of the moon. I did not take particular notice of this at the moment, because the world was often pleased to be a little shy of ecclesiastical topics in my presence. For I felt that I was picked out (though perhaps only through a coincidence) to a certain extent to represent what I call our glorious Constitution in Church and State. The phrase may be objected to by captious minds; but I own to it as mine. I threw it off in argument some little time back. I said: ‘OUR GLORIOUS CONSTITUTION IN CHURCH AND STATE.’

“Another member of the Eight Club was Peartree; also member of the Royal College of Surgeons. Mr. Peartree is not accountable to me for his opinions, and I say no more of them here than that he attends the poor gratis whenever they want him, and is not the parish doctor. Mr. Peartree may justify it to the grasp of *his* mind thus to do his republican utmost to bring an appointed officer into contempt. Suffice it that Mr. Peartree can never justify it to the grasp of *mine*.

“Between Peartree and Kimber there was a sickly sort of feeble-minded alliance. It came under my particular notice when I sold off Kimber by auction. (Goods taken in execution.) He was a widower in a white under-waistcoat, and slight shoes with bows, and had two daughters not ill-looking. Indeed the reverse. Both daughters taught dancing in scholastic establishments for Young Ladies — had done so at Mrs. Sapsea’s; nay, Twinkleton’s — and both, in giving lessons, presented the unwomanly spectacle of having little fiddles tucked under their chins. In spite of which the younger one might, if I am correctly informed — I will raise the veil so far as to say I **KNOW** she might — have soared for life from this degrading taint, but for having the class of mind allotted to what I call the common herd, and being so incredibly devoid of veneration as to become painfully ludicrous.

“When I sold off Kimber without reserve, Peartree (as poor as he can hold together) had several prime household lots knocked down to him. I am not to be blinded; and of course it was as plain to me what he was going to do with them, as it was that he was a brown hulking sort of revolutionary subject who had been in India

with the soldiers, and ought (for the sake of society) to have his neck broke. I saw the lots shortly afterwards in Kimber's lodgings—through the window—and I easily made out that there had been a sneaking pretence of lending them till better times. A man with a smaller knowledge of the world than myself might have been led to suspect that Kimber had held back money from his creditors, and fraudulently bought the goods. But, besides that I knew for certain he had no money, I knew that this would involve a species of forethought not to be made compatible with the frivolity of a caperer, inoculating other people with capering, for his bread.

“As it was the first time I had seen either of those two since the sale, I kept myself in what I call Abeyance. When selling him up, I had delivered a few remarks—shall I say a little homily?—concerning Kimber, which the world did regard as more than usually worth notice. I had come up into my pulpit, it was said, uncommonly like—and a murmur of recognition had repeated his (I will not name whose) title, before I spoke. I had then gone on to say that all present would find, in the first page of the catalogue that was lying before them, in the last paragraph before the first lot, the following words: ‘Sold in pursuance of a writ of execution issued by a creditor.’ I had then proceeded to remind my friends, that however frivolous, not to say contemptible, the business by which a man got his goods together, still his goods were as dear to him, and as cheap to society (if sold without reserve), as though his pursuits had been of a character that would bear serious contemplation. I had then divided my text (if I may be allowed so to call it) into three heads: firstly, Sold; secondly, In pursuance of a writ of execution; thirdly, Issued by a creditor; with a few moral reflections on each, and winding up with, ‘Now to the first lot’ in a manner that was complimented when I afterwards mingled with my hearers.

“So, not being certain on what terms I and Kimber stood, I was grave, I was chilling. Kimber, however, moving to me, I moved to Kimber. (I was the creditor who had issued the writ. Not that it matters.)

“‘I was alluding, Mr. Sapsea,’ said Kimber, ‘to a stranger who entered into conversation with me in the street as I came to the Club. He had been speaking to you just before, it seemed, by the churchyard; and though you had told him who you were, I could hardly persuade him that you were not high in the Church.’

“‘Idiot!’ said Peartree.

“ ‘Ass!’ said Kimber.

“ ‘Idiot and Ass!’ said the other five members.

“ ‘Idiot and Ass, gentlemen,’ I remonstrated, looking around me ‘are strong expressions to apply to a young man of good appearance and address.’ My generosity was roused; I own it.

“ ‘You’ll admit that he must be a Fool,’ said Peartree.

“ ‘You can’t deny that he must be a Blockhead,’ said Kimber.

“ Their tone of disgust amounted to being offensive. Why should the young man be so calumniated? What had he done? He had only made an innocent and natural mistake. I controlled my generous indignation, and said so.

“ ‘Natural?’ repeated Kimber; ‘*He’s a Natural!*’

“ The remaining six members of the Eight Club laughed unanimously. It stung me. It was a scornful laugh. My anger was roused in behalf of an absent, friendless stranger. I rose (for I had been sitting down).

“ ‘Gentlemen,’ I said with dignity, ‘I will not remain one of this Club allowing opprobrium to be cast on an unoffending person in his absence. I will not so violate what I call the sacred rights of hospitality. Gentlemen, until you know how to behave yourselves better, I leave you. Gentlemen, until then I withdraw, from this place of meeting, whatever personal qualifications I may have brought into it. Gentlemen, until then you cease to be the Eight Club, and must make the best you can of becoming the Seven.’

“ I put on my hat and retired. As I went down stairs I distinctly heard them give a suppressed cheer. Such is the power of demeanor and knowledge of mankind. I had forced it out of them.

“ II.

“ Whom should I meet in the street, within a few yards of the door of the inn where the Club was held, but the self-same young man whose cause I had felt it my duty so warmly — and I will add so disinterestedly — to take up.

“ ‘Is it Mr. Sapsea,’ he said doubtfully, ‘or is it——’

“ ‘It is Mr. Sapsea,’ I replied.

“ ‘Pardon me, Mr. Sapsea; you appear warm, sir.’

“ ‘I have been warm,’ I said, ‘and on your account.’ Having stated the circumstances at some length (my generosity almost overpowered him), I asked him his name.

“ ‘Mr. Sapsea,’ he answered, looking down, ‘your penetrator

is so acute, your glance into the souls of your fellow-men is so penetrating, that if I was hardy enough to deny that my name is Poker, what would it avail me?'

"I don't know that I had quite exactly made out to a fraction that his name *was* Poker, but I daresay I had been pretty near doing it.

"Well, well,' said I, trying to put him at his ease by nodding my head in a soothing way. 'Your name is Poker, and there is no harm in being named Poker.'

"Oh, Mr. Sapsea!' cried the young man, in a very well-behaved manner. 'Bless you for those words!' He then, as if ashamed of having given way to his feelings, looked down again.

"Come, Poker,' said I, 'let me hear more about you. Tell me. Where are you going to, Poker? and where do you come from?

"Ah, Mr. Sapsea!' exclaimed the young man. 'Disguise from you is impossible. You know already that I come from somewhere, and am going somewhere else. If I was to deny it what would it avail me?'

"Then don't deny it,' was my remark.

"Or,' pursued Poker, in a kind of despondent rapture, 'or if I was to deny that I came to this town to see and hear you, sir, **what** would it avail me? Or if I was to deny——'

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD.

CHAPTER I.

THE DAWN.

AN ancient English Cathedral Tower? How can the ancient English Cathedral tower be here! The well-known massive gray square tower of its old Cathedral? How can that be here! There is no spike of rusty iron in the air, between the eye and it, from any point of the real prospect. What is the spike that intervenes, and who has set it up? Maybe, it is set up by the Sultan's orders for the impaling of a horde of Turkish robbers, one by one. It is so, for cymbals clash, and the Sultan goes by to his palace in long procession. Ten thousand scimitars flash in the sunlight, and thrice ten thousand dancing-girls strew flowers. Then, follow white elephants caparisoned in countless gorgeous colors, and infinite in number and attendants. Still, the Cathedral tower rises in the background, where it cannot be, and still no writhing figure is on the grim spike. Stay! Is the spike so low a thing as the rusty spike on the top of a post of an old bedstead that has tumbled all awry? Some vague period of drowsy laughter must be devoted to the consideration of this possibility.

Shaking from head to foot, the man whose scattered consciousness has thus fantastically pieced itself together at length rises, supports his trembling frame upon his arms, and looks around. He is in the meanest and closest of small rooms. Through the ragged window-curtain, the light of early day steals in from a miserable court. He lies, dressed, across a large unseemly bed, upon a

bedstead that has indeed given way under the weight upon it. Lying, also dressed and also across the bed, not long-wise, are a Chinaman, a Lascar, and a haggard woman. The two first are in a sleep or stupor; the last is blowing at a kind of pipe to kindle it. And as she blows, and, shading it with her lean hand, concentrates its red spark of light, it serves in the dim morning as a lamp to show him what he sees of her.

"Another?" says this woman, in a querulous, rattling whisper. "Have another?"

He looks about him, with his hand to his forehead.

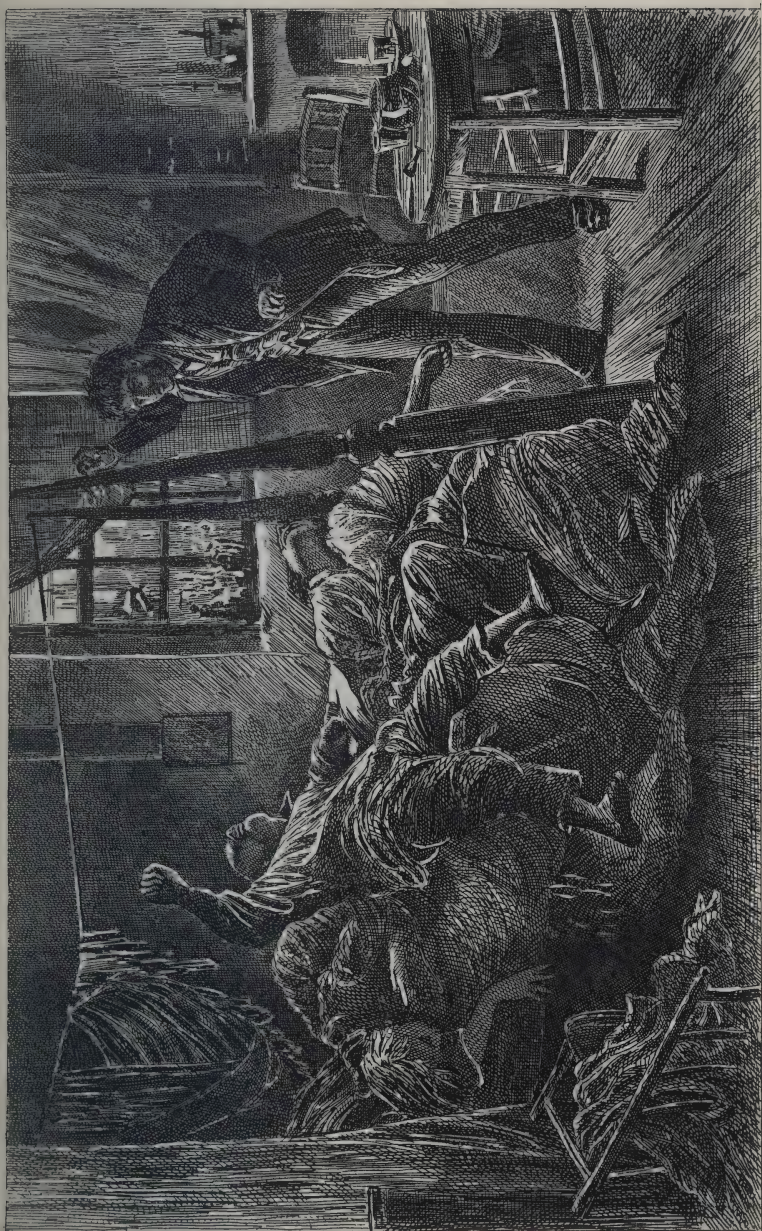
"Ye've smoked as many as five since ye come in at midnight," the woman goes on, as she chronically complains. "Poor me, poor me, my head is so bad! Them two come in after ye. Ah, poor me, the business is slack, is slack! Few Chinamen about the Docks, and fewer Lascars, and no ships coming in, these say! Here's another ready for ye, deary. Ye'll remember, like a good soul, won't ye, that the market price is drefle high just now? More nor three shillings and sixpence for a thimbleful! And ye'll remember that nobody but me (and Jack Chinaman t'other side the court; but he can't do it as well as me) has the true secret of mixing it? Ye'll pay up according, deary, won't ye?"

She blows at the pipe as she speaks, and, occasionally bubbling at it, inhales much of its contents.

"O me, O me, my lungs is weak, my lungs is bad! It's nearly ready for ye, deary. Ah, poor me, poor me, my poor hand shakes like to drop off! I see ye coming-to, and I ses to my poor self, 'I'll have another ready for him, and he'll bear in mind the market price of opium, and pay according.' O my poor head! I makes my pipes of old penny ink-bottles, ye see, deary — this is one — and I fits in a mouthpiece, this way, and I takes my mixer out of this thimble with this little horn spoon; and so I fills, deary. Ah, my poor nerves! I got Heavens-hard drunk for sixteen year afore I took to this; but this don't hurt me, not to speak of. And it takes away the hunger as well as wittles, deary."

She hands him the nearly emptied pipe, and sinks back, turning over on her face.

He rises unsteadily from the bed, lays the pipe upon



the hearthstone, draws back the ragged curtain, and looks with repugnance at his three companions. He notices that the woman has opium-smoked herself into a strange likeness of the Chinaman. His form of cheek, eye, and temple, and his color, are repeated in her. Said Chinaman convulsively wrestles with one of his many Gods, or Devils, perhaps, and snarls horribly. The Lascar laughs and dribbles at the mouth. The hostess is still.

“What visions can *she* have?” the waking man muses, as he turns her face towards him, and stands looking down at it. “Visions of many butchers’ shops, and public-houses, and much credit? Of an increase of hideous customers, and this horrible bedstead set upright again, and this horrible court swept clean? What can she rise to, under any quantity of opium, higher than that! — Eh?”

He bends down his ear, to listen to her mutterings.

“Unintelligible!”

As he watches the spasmodic shoots and darts that break out of her face and limbs, like fitful lightning out of a dark sky, some contagion in them seizes upon him: insomuch that he has to withdraw himself to a lean arm-chair by the hearth, — placed there, perhaps, for such emergencies, — and to sit in it, holding tight, until he has got the better of this unclean spirit of imitation.

Then he comes back, pounces on the Chinaman, and, seizing him with both hands by the throat, turns him violently on the bed. The Chinaman clutches the aggressive hands, resists, gasps, and protests.

“What do you say?”

A watchful pause.

“Unintelligible!”

Slowly loosening his grasp as he listens to the incoherent jargon with an attentive frown, he turns to the Lascar and fairly drags him forth upon the floor. As he falls, the Lascar starts into a half-risen attitude, glares with his eyes, lashes about him fiercely with his arms, and draws a phantom knife. It then becomes apparent that the woman has taken possession of his knife, for safety’s sake; for, she too starting up, and restraining and expositulating with him, the knife is visible in her dress, not in his, when they drowsily drop back, side by side

There has been chattering and clattering enough between them, but to no purpose. When any distinct word has been flung into the air, it has had no sense or sequence. Wherefore "unintelligible!" is again the comment of the watcher, made with some reassured nodding of his head, and a gloomy smile. He then lays certain silver money on the table, finds his hat, gropes his way down the broken stairs, gives a good morning to some rat-ridden doorkeeper, in bed in a black hutch beneath the stairs, and passes out.

That same afternoon, the massive gray square tower of an old Cathedral rises before the sight of a jaded traveller. The bells are going for daily vesper service, and he must needs attend it, one would say, from his haste to reach the open Cathedral door. The choir are getting on their sullied white robes, in a hurry, when he arrives among them, gets on his own robe, and falls into the procession filing in to service. Then the Sacristan locks the iron-barred gates that divide the sanctuary from the chancel, and all of the procession, having scuttled into their places, hide their faces; and then the intoned words, "WHEN THE WICKED MAN—" rise among groins of arches and beams of roof, awakening muttered thunder.

CHAPTER II.

A DEAN, AND A CHAPTER ALSO.

WHOSOEVER has observed that sedate and clerical bird, the rook, may perhaps have noticed that when he wings his way homeward towards nightfall, in a sedate and clerical company, two rooks will suddenly detach themselves from the rest, will retrace their flight for some distance, and will there poise and linger, — conveying to mere men the fancy that it is of some occult importance to the body politic that this artful couple should pretend to have renounced connection with it.

Similarly, service being over in the old Cathedral with the square tower, and the choir scuffling out again, and divers venerable persons of rook-like aspect dispersing, two of these latter retrace their steps, and walk together in the echoing Close.

Not only is the day waning, but the year. The low sun is fiery and yet cold behind the monastery ruin, and the Virginia creeper on the Cathedral wall has showered half its deep-red leaves down on the pavement. There has been rain this afternoon, and a wintry shudder goes among the little pools on the cracked, uneven flagstones, and through the giant elm-trees as they shed a gust of tears. Their fallen leaves lie strown thickly about. Some of these leaves, in a timid rush, seek sanctuary within the low-arched Cathedral door; but two men, coming out, resist them, and cast them forth again with their feet; this done, one of the two locks the door with a goodly key, and the other flits away with a folio music-book.

“Mr. Jasper was that, Tope?”

“Yes, Mr. Dean.”

“He has stayed late.”

“Yes, Mr. Dean. I have stayed for him, your Reverence. He has been took a little poorly.”

"Say 'taken,' Tope — to the Dean," the younger rook interposes in a low tone with this touch of correction, as who should say, "You may offer bad grammar to the laity, or the humbler clergy, not to the Dean."

Mr. Tope, Chief Verger and Showman, and accustomed to be high with excursion-parties, declines with a silent loftiness to perceive that any suggestion has been tendered to him.

"And when and how has Mr. Jasper been taken — for, as Mr. Crisparkle has remarked, it is better to say taken — taken —" repeats the Dean; "when and how has Mr. Jasper been taken —"

"Taken, sir," Tope deferentially murmurs.

"— Poorly, Tope?"

"Why, sir, Mr. Jasper was that breathed —"

"I would n't say 'That breathed,' Tope," Mr. Crisparkle interposes, with the same touch as before. "Not English — to the Dean."

"Breathed to that extent," the Dean (not unflattered by this indirect homage) condescendingly remarks, "would be preferable."

"Mr. Jasper's breathing was so remarkably short," thus discreetly does Mr. Tope work his way round the sunken rock, "when he came in, that it distressed him mightily to get his notes out: which was perhaps the cause of his having a kind of fit on him after a little. His memory grew DAZED." Mr. Tope, with his eyes on the Reverend Mr. Crisparkle, shoots this word out, as defying him to improve upon it: "and a dinness and giddiness crept over him as strange as ever I saw; though he did n't seem to mind it particularly, himself. However, a little time and a little water brought him out of his DAZE." Mr. Tope repeats the word and its emphasis, with the air of saying, "As I *have* made a success, I'll make it again."

"And Mr. Jasper has gone home quite himself, has he?" asked the Dean.

"Your Reverence, he has gone home quite himself. And I'm glad to see he's having his fire kindled up, for it's chilly after the wet, and the Cathedral had both a damp feel and a damp touch this afternoon, and he was very shivery."

They all three looked towards an old stone gatehouse crossing the Close, with an arched thoroughfare passing beneath it. Through its latticed window, a fire shines out upon the fast-darkening scene, involving in shadow the pendent masses of ivy and creeper covering the building's front. As the deep Cathedral bell strikes the hour, a ripple of wind goes through these at their distance, like a ripple of the solemn sound that hums through tomb and tower, broken niche and defaced statue, in the pile close at hand.

"Is Mr. Jasper's nephew with him?" the Dean asks.

"No, sir," replies the Verger, "but expected. There's his own solitary shadow betwixt his two windows — the one looking this way, and the one looking down into the High Street — drawing his own curtains now."

"Well, well," says the Dean, with a sprightly air of breaking up the little conference, "I hope Mr. Jasper's heart may not be too much set upon his nephew. Our affections, however laudable, in this transitory world, should never master us; we should guide them, guide them. I find I am not disagreeably reminded of my dinner, by hearing my dinner-bell. Perhaps, Mr. Crisparkle, you will, before going home, look in on Jasper?"

"Certainly, Mr. Dean. And tell him that you had the kindness to desire to know how he was?"

"Ay, do so, do so. Certainly. Wished to know how he was. By all means. Wished to know how he was."

With a pleasant air of patronage, the Dean as nearly cocks his quaint hat as a Dean in good spirits may, and directs his comely gaiters towards the ruddy dining-room of the snug old red-brick house, where he is at present "in residence" with Mrs. Dean and Miss Dean.

Mr. Crisparkle, Minor Canon, fair and rosy, and perpetually pitching himself head-foremost into all the deep running water in the surrounding country; Mr. Crisparkle, Minor Canon, early riser, musical, classical, cheerful, kind, good-natured, social, contented, and boy-like; Mr. Crisparkle, Minor Canon and good man, lately "Coach" upon the chief Pagan high-roads, but since promoted by a patron (grateful for a well-taught son) to his present Christian beat; betakes himself to the gatehouse, on his way home to his early tea.

"Sorry to hear from Tope that you have not been well, Jasper."

"O, it was nothing, nothing!"

"You look a little worn."

"Do I? O, I don't think so. What is better, I don't feel so. Tope has made too much of it, I suspect. It's his trade to make the most of everything appertaining to the Cathedral, you know."

"I may tell the Dean—I call expressly from the Dean—that you are all right again?"

The reply, with a slight smile, is, "Certainly; with my respects and thanks to the Dean."

"I'm glad to hear that you expect young Drood."

"I expect the dear fellow every moment."

"Ah! He will do you more good than a doctor, Jasper."

"More good than a dozen doctors; for I love him dearly, and I don't love doctors, or doctors' stuff."

Mr. Jasper is a dark man of some six-and-twenty, with thick, lustrous, well-arranged black hair and whisker. He looks older than he is, as dark men often do. His voice is deep and good, his face and figure are good, his manner is a little sombre. His room is a little sombre, and may have had its influence in forming his manner. It is mostly in shadow. Even when the sun shines brilliantly, it seldom touches the grand piano in the recess, or the folio music-books on the stand or the bookshelves on the wall, or the unfinished picture of a blooming school-girl hanging over the chimney-piece; her flowing brown hair tied with a blue riband, and her beauty remarkable for a quite childish, almost babyish, touch of saucy discontent, comically conscious of itself. (There is not the least artistic merit in this picture, which is a mere daub; but it is clear that the painter has made it humorously—one might almost say, revengefully—like the original.)

"We shall miss you, Jasper, at the 'Alternate Musical Wednesdays' to-night; but no doubt you are best at home. Good night. God bless you! 'Tell me, shepherds, te-e-ell me; tell me-e-e, have you seen (have you seen, have you seen, have you seen) my-y-y Flo-o-ora-a pass this way?'" Melodiously good Minor Canon the

Reverend Septimus Crisparkle thus delivers himself, in musical rhythm, as he withdraws his amiable face from the doorway and conveys it down stairs.

Sounds of greeting and recognition pass between the Reverend Septimus and somebody else, at the stair-foot. Mr. Jasper listens, starts from his chair, and catches a young fellow in his arms, exclaiming, —

“ My dear Edwin ! ”

“ My dear Jack ! So glad to see you ! ”

“ Get off your great-coat, bright boy, and sit down here in your own corner. Your feet are not wet ? Pull your boots off. Do pull your boots off.”

“ My dear Jack, I am as dry as a bone. Don’t moddley-coddley, there ’s a good fellow. I like anything better than being moddley-coddleyed.”

With the check upon him of being unsympathetically restrained in a genial outburst of enthusiasm, Mr. Jasper stands still, and looks on intently at the young fellow, divesting himself of his outer coat, hat, gloves, and so forth. Once for all, a look of intentness and intensity — a look of hungry, exacting, watchful, and yet devoted affection — is always, now and ever afterwards, on the Jasper face whenever the Jasper face is addressed in this direction. And whenever it is so addressed, it is never, on this occasion or on any other, dividedly addressed ; it is always concentrated.

“ Now I am right, and now I ’ll take my corner, Jack. Any dinner, Jack ? ”

Mr. Jasper opens a door at the upper end of the room, and discloses a small inner room pleasantly lighted and prepared, wherein a comely dame is in the act of setting dishes on table.

“ What a jolly old Jack it is ! ” cries the young fellow, with a clap of his hands. “ Look here, Jack ; tell me ; whose birthday is it ? ”

“ Not yours, I know,” Mr. Jasper answers, pausing to consider.

“ Not mine, you know ? No ; not mine, *I* know ! Pussy’s ! ”

Fixed as the look the young fellow meets is, there is yet in it some strange power of suddenly including the sketch over the chimney-piece.

"Pussy's, Jack! We must drink Many happy returns to her. Come, uncle, take your dutiful and sharp-set nephew in to dinner."

As the boy (for he is little more) lays a hand on Jasper's shoulder, Jasper cordially and gayly lays a hand on *his* shoulder, and so Marseillaise-wise they go in to dinner.

"And Lord! Here's Mrs. Tope!" cries the boy. "Lovelier than ever!"

"Never you mind me, Master Edwin," retorts the Verger's wife; "I can take care of myself."

"You can't. You're much too handsome. Give me a kiss, because it's Pussy's birthday."

"I'd Pussy you, young man, if I was Pussy, as you call her," Mrs. Tope blushing retorts, after being saluted. "Your uncle's too much wrapped up in you, that's where it is. He makes so much of you that it's my opinion you think you've only to call your Pussys by the dozen, to make 'em come."

"You forget, Mrs. Tope," Mr. Jasper interposes, taking his place at table with a genial smile, "and so do you, Ned, that Uncle and Nephew are words prohibited here by common consent and express agreement. For what we are going to receive His holy name be praised!"

"Done like the Dean! Witness, Edwin Drood! Please to carve, Jack, for I can't."

This sally ushers in the dinner. Little to the present purpose, or to any purpose, is said, while it is in course of being disposed of. At length the cloth is drawn, and a dish of walnuts and a decanter of rich-colored sherry are placed upon the table.

"I say! Tell me, Jack," the young fellow then flows on; "do you really and truly feel as if the mention of our relationship divided us at all? I don't."

"Uncles as a rule, Ned, are so much older than their nephews," is the reply, "that I have that feeling instinctively."

"As a rule? Ah, maybe! But what is a difference in age of half a dozen years or so? And some uncles, in large families, are even younger than their nephews. By George, I wish it was the case with us!"

"Why?"

"Because if it was, I'd take the lead with you, Jack, and be as wise as Begone dull care that turned a young man gray, and begone dull care that turned an old man to clay. Halloo, Jack! Don't drink."

"Why not?"

"Asks why not, on Pussy's birthday, and no Happy Returns proposed! Pussy, Jack, and many of 'em! Happy returns, I mean."

Laying an affectionate and laughing touch on the boy's extended hand, as if it were at once his giddy head and his light heart, Mr. Jasper drinks the toast in silence.

"Hip, hip, hip, and nine times nine, and one to finish with, and all that, understood. Hooray, hooray, hooray! And now, Jack, let's have a little talk about Pussy. Two pairs of nut-crackers? Pass me one, and take the other." Crack. "How's Pussy getting on, Jack?"

"With her music? Fairly."

"What a dreadfully conscientious fellow you are, Jack! But I know, Lord bless you! Inattentive, isn't she?"

"She can learn anything, if she will."

"If she will? Egad, that's it. But if she won't?"

Crack. On Mr. Jasper's part.

"How's she looking, Jack?"

Mr. Jasper's concentrated face again includes the portrait as he returns, "Very like your sketch indeed."

"I *am* a little proud of it," says the young fellow, glancing up at the sketch with complacency, and then shutting one eye, and taking a corrected prospect of it over a level bridge of nut-cracker in the air: "Not badly hit off from memory. But I ought to have caught that expression pretty well, for I have seen it often enough."

Crack. On Edwin Drood's part.

Crack. On Mr. Jasper's part.

"In point of fact," the former resumes, after some silent dipping among his fragments of walnut with an air of pique, "I see it whenever I go to see Pussy. If I don't find it on her face, I leave it there. — You know I do, Miss Scornful Pert. Booh!" With a twirl of the nut-crackers at the portrait.

Crack. Crack. Crack. Slowly, on Mr. Jasper's part.

Crack. Sharply on the part of Edwin Drood.

Silence on both sides.

"Have you lost your tongue, Jack?"

"Have you found yours, Ned?"

"No, but really; is n't it, you know, after all?"

Mr. Jasper lifts his dark eyebrows inquiringly.

"Isn't it unsatisfactory to be cut off from choice in such a matter? There, Jack! I tell you! If I could choose, I would choose Pussy from all the pretty girls in the world."

"But you have not got to choose."

"That's what I complain of. My dead-and-gone father and Pussy's dead-and-gone father must needs marry us together by anticipation. Why the — Devil, I was going to say, if it had been respectful to their memory — could n't they leave us alone?"

"Tut, tut, dear boy," Mr. Jasper remonstrates, in a tone of gentle deprecation.

"Tut, tut? Yes, Jack, it's all very well for *you*. *You* can take it easily. *Your* life is not laid down to scale, and lined and dotted out for you, like a surveyor's plan. *You* have no uncomfortable suspicion that you are forced upon anybody, nor has anybody an uncomfortable suspicion that she is forced upon you, or that you are forced upon her. *You* can choose for yourself. Life, for *you*, is a plum with the natural bloom on; it has n't been over-carefully wiped off for *you* —"

"Don't stop, dear fellow. Go on."

"Can I anyhow have hurt your feelings, Jack?"

"How can you have hurt my feelings?"

"Good Heaven, Jack, you look frightfully ill! There's a strange film come over your eyes."

Mr. Jasper, with a forced smile, stretches out his right hand, as if at once to disarm apprehension and gain time to get better. After a while he says faintly, —

"I have been taking opium for a pain — an agony — that sometimes overcomes me. The effects of the medicine steal over me like a blight or a cloud, and pass. You see them in the act of passing; they will be gone directly. Look away from me, they will go all the sooner."

With a scared face the younger man complies, by casting his eyes downward at the ashes on the hearth. Not

relaxing his own gaze at the fire, but rather strengthening it with a fierce, firm grip upon his elbow-chair, the elder sits for a few moments rigid, and then, with thick drops standing on his forehead, and a sharp catch of his breath, becomes as he was before. On his so subsiding in his chair, his nephew gently and assiduously tends him while he quite recovers. When Jasper is restored, he lays a tender hand upon his nephew's shoulder, and, in a tone of voice less troubled than the purport of his words — indeed, with something of raillery or banter in it — thus addresses him : —

“ There is said to be a hidden skeleton in every house ; but you thought there was none in mine, dear Ned.”

“ Upon my life, Jack, I did think so. However, when I come to consider that even in Pussy's house — if she had one — and in mine — if I had one — ”

“ You were going to say (but that I interrupted you in spite of myself) what a quiet life mine is. No whirl and uproar around me, no distracting commerce or calculation, no risk, no change of place, myself devoted to the art I pursue, my business my pleasure.”

“ I really was going to say something of the kind, Jack ; but you see, you, speaking of yourself, almost necessarily leave out much that I should have put in. For instance : I should have put in the foreground your being so much respected as Lay Precentor, or Lay Clerk, or whatever you call it, of this Cathedral ; your enjoying the reputation of having done such wonders with the choir ; your choosing your society, and holding such an independent position in this queer old place ; your gift of teaching (why, even Pussy, who don't like being taught, says there never was such a Master as you are !) and your connection.”

“ Yes ; I saw what you were tending to. I hate it.”

“ Hate it, Jack ? ” (Much bewildered.)

“ I hate it. The cramped monotony of my existence grinds me away by the grain. How does our service sound to you ? ”

“ Beautiful ! Quite celestial,”

“ It often sounds to me quite devilish. I am so weary of it. The echoes of my own voice among the arches seem to mock me with my daily drudging round. No

wretched monk who droned his life away in that gloomy place, before me, can have been more tired of it than I am. He could take for relief (and did take) to carving demons out of the stalls and seats and desks. What shall I do? Must I take to carving them out of my heart?"

"I thought you had so exactly found your niche in life, Jack," Edwin Drood returns, astonished, bending forward in his chair to lay a sympathetic hand on Jasper's knee, and looking at him with an anxious face.

"I know you thought so. They all think so."

"Well; I suppose they do," says Edwin, meditating aloud. "Pussy thinks so."

"When did she tell you that?"

"The last time I was here. You remember when. Three months ago."

"How did she phrase it?"

"Oh! She only said that she had become your pupil, and that you were made for your vocation."

The younger man glances at the portrait. The elder sees it in him.

"Anyhow, my dear Ned," Jasper resumes, as he shakes his head with a grave cheerfulness, "I must subdue myself to my vocation, which is much the same thing outwardly. It's too late to find another now. This is a confidence between us."

"It shall be sacredly preserved, Jack."

"I have reposed it in you, because —"

"I feel it, I assure you. Because we are fast friends, and because you love and trust me, as I love and trust you. Both hands, Jack."

As each stands looking into the other's eyes, and as the uncle holds the nephew's hands, the uncle thus proceeds:—

"You know now, don't you, that even a poor monotonous chorister and grinder of music, in his niche, may be troubled with some stray sort of ambition, aspiration, restlessness, dissatisfaction, what shall we call it?"

"Yes, dear Jack."

"And you will remember?"

"My dear Jack, I only ask you, am I likely to forget what you have said with so much feeling?"

“Take it as a warning, then.”

In the act of having his hands released, and of moving a step back, Edwin pauses for an instant to consider the application of these last words. The instant over, he says, sensibly touched, —

“I am afraid I am but a shallow, surface kind of fellow, Jack, and that my head-piece is none of the best. But I need n’t say I am young ; and perhaps I shall not grow worse as I grow older. At all events, I hope I have something impressible within me, which feels — deeply feels — the disinterestedness of your painfully laying your inner self bare, as a warning to me.”

Mr. Jasper’s steadiness of face and figure becomes so marvellous that his breathing seems to have stopped.

“I could n’t fail to notice, Jack, that it cost you a great effort, and that you were very much moved, and very unlike your usual self. Of course I knew that you were extremely fond of me, but I really was not prepared for your, as I may say, sacrificing yourself to me, in that way.”

Mr. Jasper, becoming a breathing man again without the smallest stage of transition between the two extreme states, lifts his shoulders, laughs, and waves his right arm.

“No ; don’t put the sentiment away, Jack ; please don’t ; for I am very much in earnest. I have no doubt that that unhealthy state of mind which you have so powerfully described is attended with some real suffering, and is hard to bear. But let me reassure you, Jack, as to the chances of its overcoming me. I don’t think I am in the way of it. In some few months less than another year, you know, I shall carry Pussy off from school as Mrs. Edwin Drood. I shall then go engineering into the East, and Pussy with me. And although we have our little tiffs now, arising out of a certain unavoidable flatness that attends our love-making, owing to its end being all settled beforehand, still I have no doubt of our getting on capitally then, when it’s done and can’t be helped. In short, Jack, to go back to the old song I was freely quoting at dinner (and who knows old songs better than you?), my wife shall dance and I will sing, so merrily pass the day. Of Pussy’s being beautiful there cannot

be a doubt ; — and when you are good besides, Little Miss Impudence," once more apostrophizing the portrait, "I'll burn your comic likeness and paint your music-master another."

Mr. Jasper, with his hand to his chin, and with an expression of musing benevolence on his face, has attentively watched every animated look and gesture attending the delivery of these words. He remains in that attitude after they are spoken, as if in a kind of fascination attendant on his strong interest in the youthful spirit that he loves so well. Then, he says with a quiet smile, —

"You won't be warned, then?"

"No, Jack."

"You can't be warned, then?"

"No, Jack, not by you. Besides that, I don't really consider myself in danger, I don't like your putting yourself in that position."

"Shall we go and walk in the churchyard?"

"By all means. You won't mind my slipping out of it for half a moment to the Nuns' House, and leaving a parcel there? Only gloves for Pussy; as many pairs of gloves as she is years old to-day. Rather poetical, Jack?"

Mr. Jasper, still in the same attitude, murmurs, " 'Nothing half so sweet in life,' Ned!"

"Here's the parcel in my great-coat pocket. They must be presented to-night, or the poetry is gone. It's against regulations for me to call at night, but not to leave a packet. I am ready, Jack!"

Mr. Jasper dissolves his attitude, and they go out together.

CHAPTER III.

THE NUNS' HOUSE.

For sufficient reasons, which this narrative will itself unfold as it advances, a fictitious name must be bestowed upon the old Cathedral town. Let it stand in these pages as Cloisterham. It was once possibly known to the Druids by another name, and certainly to the Romans by another, and to the Saxons by another, and to the Normans by another; and a name more or less in the course of many centuries can be of little moment to its dusty chronicles.

An ancient city Cloisterham, and no meet dwelling-place for any one with hankerings after the noisy world. A monotonous, silent city, deriving an earthy flavor throughout, from its Cathedral crypt, and so abounding in vestiges of monastic graves, that the Cloisterham children grow small salad in the dust of abbots and abbesses, and make dirt-pies of nuns and friars; while every ploughman in its outlying fields renders to once puissant Lord Treasurers, Archbishops, Bishops, and such-like, the attention which the Ogre in the story-book desired to render to his unbidden visitor, and grinds their bones to make his bread.

A drowsy city Cloisterham, whose inhabitants seem to suppose, with an inconsistency more strange than rare, that all its changes lie behind it, and that there are no more to come. A queer moral to derive from antiquity, yet older than any traceable antiquity. So silent are the streets of Cloisterham (though prone to echo on the smallest provocation), that of a summer-day the sunblinds of its shops scarce dare to flap in the south wind; while the sun-browned tramps who pass along and stare, quicken their limp a little, that they may the sooner get beyond the confines of its oppressive respectability. This

is a feat not difficult of achievement, seeing that the streets of Cloisterham city are little more than one narrow street by which you get into it and get out of it : the rest being mostly disappointing yards with pumps in them and no thoroughfare, — exception made of the Cathedral close and a paved Quaker settlement, in color and general conformation very like a Quakeress's bonnet, up in a shady corner.

In a word, a city of another and a bygone time is Cloisterham, with its hoarse Cathedral bell, its hoarse rooks hovering about the Cathedral tower, its hoarser and less distinct rooks in the stalls far beneath. Fragments of old wall, saint's chapel, chapter-house, convent, and monastery have got incongruously or obstructively built into many of its houses and gardens, much as kindred jumbled notions have become incorporated into many of its citizens' minds. All things in it are of the past. Even its single pawnbroker takes in no pledges, nor has he for a long time, but offers vainly an unredeemed stock for sale, of which the costlier articles are dim and pale old watches apparently in a slow perspiration, tarnished sugar-tongs with ineffectual legs, and odd volumes of dismal books. The most abundant and the most agreeable evidences of progressing life in Cloisterham are the evidences of vegetable life in its many gardens ; even its drooping and despondent little theatre has its poor strip of garden, receiving the foul fiend, when he ducks from its stage into the infernal regions, among scarlet beans or oyster-shells, according to the season of the year.

In the midst of Cloisterham stands the Nuns' House ; a venerable brick edifice whose present appellation is doubtless derived from the legend of its conventual uses. On the trim gate enclosing its old court-yard is a resplendent brass plate flashing forth the legend : " Seminary for Young Ladies. Miss Twinkleton." The house-front is so old and worn, and the brass plate is so shining and staring, that the general result has reminded imaginative strangers of a battered old beau with a large modern eyeglass stuck in his blind eye.

Whether the nuns of yore, being of a submissive rather than a stiff-necked generation, habitually bent their contemplative heads to avoid collision with the beams in the

low ceilings of the many chambers of their House; whether they sat in its long low windows, telling their beads for their mortification instead of making necklaces of them for their adornment; whether they were ever walled up alive in odd angles and jutting gables of the building for having some ineradicable leaven of busy mother Nature in them which has kept the fermenting world alive ever since;—these may be matters of interest to its haunting ghosts (if any), but constitute no item in Miss Twinkleton's half-yearly accounts. They are neither of Miss Twinkleton's inclusive regulars, nor of her extras. The lady who undertakes the poetical department of the establishment at so much (or so little) a quarter, has no pieces in her list of recitals bearing on such unprofitable questions.

As, in some cases of drunkenness, and in others of animal magnetism, there are two states of consciousness which never clash, but each of which pursues its separate course as though it were continuous instead of broken (thus if I hide my watch when I am drunk, I must be drunk again before I can remember where), so Miss Twinkleton has two distinct and separate phases of being. Every night, the moment the young ladies have retired to rest, does Miss Twinkleton smarten up her curls a little, brighten up her eyes a little, and become a sprightlier Miss Twinkleton than the young ladies have ever seen. Every night, at the same hour, does Miss Twinkleton resume the topics of the previous night, comprehending the tenderer scandal of Cloisterham, of which she has no knowledge whatever by day, and references to a certain season at Tunbridge Wells (airily called by Miss Twinkleton in this state of her existence "The Wells"), notably the season wherein a certain finished gentleman (compassionately called by Miss Twinkleton in this state of her existence, "Foolish Mr. Porters") revealed a homage of the heart, whereof Miss Twinkleton, in her scholastic state of existence, is as ignorant as a granite pillar. Miss Twinkleton's companion in both states of existence, and equally adaptable to either, is one Mrs. Tisher, a deferential widow, with a weak back, a chronic sigh, and a suppressed voice, who looks after the young ladies' wardrobes, and leads them to infer that she has

seen better days. Perhaps this is the reason why it is an article of faith with the servants, handed down from race to race, that the departed Tisher was a hairdresser.

The pet pupil of the Nuns' House is Miss Rosa Bud, of course called Rosebud; wonderfully pretty, wonderfully childish, wonderfully whimsical. An awkward interest (awkward because romantic) attaches to Miss Bud in the minds of the young ladies, on account of its being known to them that a husband has been chosen for her by will and bequest, and that her guardian is bound down to bestow her on that husband when he comes of age. Miss Twinkleton, in her seminary state of existence, has combated the romantic aspect of this destiny by affecting to shake her head over it behind Miss Bud's dimpled shoulders, and to brood on the unhappy lot of that doomed little victim. But with no better effect—possibly some unfelt touch of foolish Mr. Porters has undermined the endeavor—than to evoke from the young ladies a unanimous bedchamber cry of, "Oh! what a pretending old thing Miss Twinkleton is, my dear!"

The Nuns' House is never in such a state of flutter as when this allotted husband calls to see little Rosebud. (It is unanimously understood by the young ladies that he is lawfully entitled to this privilege, and that if Miss Twinkleton disputed it she would be instantly taken up and transported.) When his ring at the gate bell is expected, or takes place, every young lady who can, under any pretence, look out of window, looks out of window; while every young lady who is "practising" practises out of time; and the French class becomes so demoralized that the Mark goes round as briskly as the bottle at a convivial party in the last century.

On the afternoon of the day next after the dinner of two at the Gate House, the bell is rung with the usual fluttering results.

"Mr. Edwin Drood to see Miss Rosa."

This is the announcement of the parlor-maid in chief. Miss Twinkleton, with an exemplary air of melancholy on her, turns to the sacrifice, and says, "You may go down, my dear." Miss Bud goes down, followed by all eyes.

Mr. Edwin Drood is waiting in Miss Twinkleton's own parlor, — a dainty room, with nothing more directly scholastic in it than a terrestrial and a celestial globe. These expressive machines imply (to parents and guardians) that even when Miss Twinkleton retires into the bosom of privacy, duty may at any moment compel her to become a sort of Wandering Jewess, scouring the earth and soaring through the skies in search of knowledge for her pupils.

The last new maid, who has never seen the young gentleman Miss Rosa is engaged to, and who is making his acquaintance between the hinges of the open door, left open for the purpose, stumbles guiltily down the kitchen stairs, as a charming little apparition with its face concealed by a little silk apron thrown over its head, glides into the parlor.

"Oh! It *is* so ridiculous!" says the apparition, stopping and shrinking. "Don't, Eddy!"

"Don't what, Rosa?"

"Don't come any nearer, please. It *is* so absurd."

"What is absurd, Rosa?"

"The whole thing is. It *is* so absurd to be an engaged orphan; and it *is* so absurd to have the girls and the servants scuttling about after one, like mice in the wainscot; and it *is* so absurd to be called upon!"

The apparition appears to have a thumb in the corner of its mouth while making this complaint.

"You give me an affectionate reception, Pussy, I must say."

"Well, I will in a minute, Eddy, but I can't just yet. How are you?" (very shortly.)

"I am unable to reply that I am much the better for seeing you, Pussy, inasmuch as I see nothing of you."

This second remonstrance brings a dark, bright, pouting eye out from a corner of the apron; but it swiftly becomes invisible again, as the apparition exclaims, "Oh! Good Gracious, you have had half your hair cut off!"

"I should have done better to have had my head cut off, I think," says Edwin, rumpling the hair in question, with a fierce glance at the looking-glass, and giving an impatient stamp. "Shall I go?"

"No, you need n't go just yet, Eddy. The girls would all be asking questions why you went."

"Once for all, Rosa, will you uncover that ridiculous little head of yours and give me a welcome?"

The apron is pulled off the childish head, as its wearer replies, "You're very welcome, Eddy. There! I'm sure that's nice. Shake hands. No, I can't kiss you, because I've got an acidulated drop in my mouth."

"Are you at all glad to see me, Pussy?"

"O yes, I'm dreadfully glad. — Go and sit down. — Miss Twinkleton."

It is the custom of that excellent lady, when these visits occur, to appear every three minutes, either in her own person or in that of Mrs. Tisher, and lay an offering on the shrine of Propriety by affecting to look for some desiderated article. On the present occasion, Miss Twinkleton, gracefully gliding in and out, says, in passing, "How do you do, Mr. Drood? Very glad indeed to have the pleasure. Pray excuse me. Tweezers. Thank you!"

"I got the gloves last evening, Eddy, and I like them very much. They are beauties."

"Well, that's something," the affianced replies, half grumbling. "The smallest encouragement thankfully received. And how did you pass your birthday, Pussy?"

"Delightfully! Everybody gave me a present. And we had a feast. And we had a ball at night."

"A feast and a ball, eh? These occasions seem to go off tolerably well without me, Pussy."

"De-lightfully!" cries Rosa, in a quite spontaneous manner, and without the least pretence of reserve.

"Hah! And what was the feast?"

"Tarts, oranges, jellies, and shrimps."

"Any partners at the ball?"

"We danced with one another, of course, sir. But some of the girls made game to be their brothers. It was so droll!"

"Did anybody make game to be —"

"To be you? O dear, yes!" cries Rosa, laughing with great enjoyment. "That was the first thing done."

"I hope she did it pretty well," says Edwin, rather doubtfully.

"Oh! It was excellent!—I wouldn't dance with you, you know."

Edwin scarcely seems to see the force of this; begs to know if he may take the liberty to ask why?

"Because I was so tired of you," returns Rosa. But she quickly adds, and pleadingly, too, seeing displeasure in his face: "Dear Eddy, you were just as tired of me, you know."

"Did I say so, Rosa?"

"Say so! Do you ever say so? No, you only showed it. O, she did it so well!" cries Rosa, in a sudden ecstasy with her counterfeit betrothed.

"It strikes me that she must be a devilish impudent girl," says Edwin Drood. "And so, Pussy, you have passed your last birthday in this old house."

"Ah, yes!" Rosa clasps her hands, looks down with a sigh, and shakes her head.

"You seem to be sorry, Rosa."

"I am sorry for the poor old place. Somehow, I feel as if it would miss me, when I am gone so far away, so young."

"Perhaps we had better stop short, Rosa?"

She looks up at him with a swift, bright look; next moment shakes her head, sighs, and looks down again.

"That is to say, is it, Pussy, that we are both resigned?"

She nods her head again, and after a short silence, quaintly bursts out with, "You know we must be married, and married from here, Eddy, or the poor girls will be so dreadfully disappointed!"

For the moment there is more of compassion, both for her and for himself, in her affianced husband's face, than there is of love. He checks the look, and asks, "Shall I take you out for a walk, Rosa dear?"

Rosa dear does not seem at all clear on this point, until her face, which has been comically reflective, brightens. "O yes, Eddy; let us go for a walk! And I'll tell you what we'll do. You shall pretend that you are engaged to somebody else, and I'll pretend that I am not engaged to anybody, and then we sha' n't quarrel."

"Do you think that will prevent our falling out, Rosa?"

"I know it will. Hush! Pretend to look out of window — Mrs. Tisher!"

Through a fortuitous concourse of accidents the matronly Tisher heaves in sight, says, in rustling through the room like the legendary ghost of a dowager in silken skirts, "I hope I see Mr. Drood well; though I need n't ask, if I may judge from his complexion? I trust I disturb no one; but there *was* a paper-knife — O, thank you, I am sure!" and disappears with her prize.

"One other thing you must do, Eddy, to oblige me," says Rosebud. "The moment we get into the street, you must put me outside and keep close to the house yourself, — squeeze and graze yourself against it."

"By all means, Rosa, if you wish it. Might I ask why?"

"Oh! because I don't want the girls to see you."

"It's a fine day; but would you like me to carry an umbrella up?"

"Don't be foolish, sir. You haven't got polished leather boots on," pouting, with one shoulder raised.

"Perhaps that might escape the notice of the girls, even if they did see me," remarks Edwin, looking down at his boots with a sudden distaste for them.

"Nothing escapes their notice, sir. And then I know what would happen. Some of them would begin reflecting on me by saying (for *they* are free) that they never will on any account engage themselves to lovers without polished leather boots. Hark! Miss Twinkleton. I'll ask for leave."

That discreet lady being indeed heard without, inquiring of nobody in a blandly conversational tone as she advances, "Eh? Indeed! Are you quite sure you saw my mother-of-pearl button-holder on the work-table in my room?" is at once solicited for walking leave, and graciously accords it. And soon the young couple go out of the Nuns' House, taking all precautions against the discovery of the so vitally defective boots of Mr. Edwin Drood, — precautions, let us hope, effective for the peace of Mrs. Edwin Drood, that is to be.

"Which way shall we take, Rosa?"

Rosa replies, "I want to go to the Lumps-of-Delight shop."

"To the —"

"A Turkish sweetmeat, sir. My gracious me! don't you understand anything? Call yourself an Engineer, and not know *that*?"

"Why, how should I know it, Rosa?"

"Because I am very fond of them. But oh! I forgot what we are to pretend. No, you need n't know anything about them; never mind."

So he is gloomily borne off to the Lumps-of-Delight shop, where Rosa makes her purchase, and, after offering some to him (which he rather indignantly declines), begins to partake of it with great zest, previously taking off and rolling up a pair of little pink gloves, like rose-leaves, and occasionally putting her little pink fingers to her rosy lips, to cleanse them from the Dust of Delight that comes off the Lumps.

"Now, be a good-tempered Eddy, and pretend. And so you are engaged?"

"And so I am engaged."

"Is she nice?"

"Charming."

"Tall?"

"Immensely tall!" (Rosa being short.)

"Must be gawky, I should think," is Rosa's quiet commentary.

"I beg your pardon; not at all," contradiction rising in him. "What is termed a fine woman, a splendid woman."

"Big nose, no doubt," is the quiet commentary again.

"Not a little one, certainly," is the quick reply. (Rosa's being a little one.)

"Long pale nose, with a red knob in the middle. I know the sort of nose," says Rosa, with a satisfied nod, and tranquilly enjoying the Lumps.

"You *don't* know the sort of nose, Rosa," with some warmth; "because it's nothing of the kind."

"Not a pale nose, Eddy?"

"No." Determined not to assent.

"A red nose? Oh! I don't like red noses. However, to be sure, she can always powder it."

"She would scorn to powder it," says Edwin, becoming heated.

"Would she? What a stupid thing she must be! Is she stupid in everything!"

"No. In nothing."

After a pause, in which the whimsically wicked face has not been unobservant of him, Rosa says, —

"And this most sensible of creatures likes the idea of being carried off to Egypt, does she, Eddy?"

"Yes. She takes a sensible interest in triumphs of engineering skill, especially when they are to change the whole condition of an undeveloped country."

"Lor!" says Rosa, shrugging her shoulders, with a little laugh of wonder.

"Do you object," Edwin inquires, with a majestic turn of his eyes downward upon the fairy figure, — "do you object, Rosa, to her feeling that interest?"

"Object? My dear Eddy! But really. Does n't she hate boilers and things?"

"I can answer for her not being so idiotic as to hate Boilers," he returns, with angry emphasis; "though I cannot answer for her views about Things, really not understanding what Things are meant.

"But don't she hate Arabs, and Turks, and Fellahs, and people?"

"Certainly not," very firmly.

"At least, she *must* hate the Pyramids? Come, Eddy?"

"Why should she be such a little — tall, I mean — Goose, as to hate the Pyramids, Rosa?"

"Ah! you should hear Miss Twinkleton," often nodding her head, and much enjoying the Lumps, "bore about them, and then you wouldn't ask. Tiresome old burying-grounds! Isises, and Ibises, and Cheopses, and Pharaohses; who cares about them? And then there was Belzoni, or somebody, dragged out by the legs, half choked with bats and dust. All the girls say serve him right, and hope it hurt him, and wish he had been quite choked."

The two youthful figures, side by side, but not now arm in arm, wander discontentedly about the old Close; and each sometimes stops and slowly imprints a deeper footstep in the fallen leaves.

"Well!" says Edwin, after a lengthy silence. "According to custom. We can't get on, Rosa."

Rosa tosses her head, and says she don't want to get on.

"That 's a pretty sentiment, Rosa, considering."

"Considering what?"

"If I say what, you 'll go wrong again."

"You 'll go wrong, you mean, Eddy. Don't be ungenerous."

"Ungenerous! I like that!"

"Then I *don't* like that, and so I tell you plainly," Rosa pouts.

"Now, Rosa, I put it to you. Who disparaged my profession, my destination —"

"You are not going to be buried in the Pyramids, I hope?" she interrupts, arching her delicate eyebrows.

"You never said you were. If you are, why haven't you mentioned it to me? I can't find out your plans by instinct."

"Now, Rosa, you know very well what I mean, my dear."

"Well, then, why did you begin with your detestable red-nosed giantesses? And she would, she would, she would, she would, she would powder it!" cries Rosa, in a little burst of comical contradictory spleen.

"Somehow or other, I never can come right in these discussions," says Edwin, sighing and becoming resigned.

"How is it possible, sir, that you ever can come right when you're always wrong? And as to Belzoni, I suppose he's dead; — I'm sure I hope he is — and how can his legs or his chokes concern you?"

"It is nearly time for your return, Rosa. We have not had a very happy walk, have we?"

"A happy walk? A detestably unhappy walk, sir. If I go up stairs the moment I get in and cry till I can't take my dancing-lesson, you are responsible, mind!"

"Let us be friends, Rosa."

"Ah!" cries Rosa, shaking her head and bursting into real tears. "I wish we *could* be friends! It's because we can't be friends, that we try one another so I am a young little thing, Eddy, to have an old heart

ache; but I really, really have, sometimes. Don't be angry. I know you have one yourself, too often. We should both of us have done better, if What is to be had been left, What might have been. I am quite a serious little thing now, and not teasing you. Let each of us forbear, this one time, on our own account and on the other's!"

Disarmed by this glimpse of a woman's nature in the spoilt child, though for an instant disposed to resent it as seeming to involve the enforced infliction of himself upon her, Edwin Drood stands watching her as she childishly cries and sobs, with both hands to the handkerchief at her eyes, and then — she becoming more composed, and indeed beginning in her young inconstancy to laugh at herself for having been so moved — leads her to a seat hard by under the elm-trees.

"One clear word of understanding, Pussy dear. I am not clever out of my own line, — now I come to think of it I don't know that I am particularly clever in it, — but I want to do right. There is not — there may be — I really don't see my way to what I want to say, but I must say it before we part, — there is not any other young —"

"O no, Eddy! It's generous of you to ask me; but no, no, no!"

They have come very near to the Cathedral windows, and at this moment the organ and the choir sound out sublimely. As they sit listening to the solemn swell, the confidence of last night rises in young Edwin Drood's mind, and he thinks how unlike this music is to that discordance.

"I fancy I can distinguish Jack's voice," is his remark in a low tone in connection with the train of thought.

"Take me back at once, please," urges his Affianced, quickly laying her light hand upon his wrist. "They will all be coming out directly; let us get away. O, what a resounding chord! But don't let us stop to listen to it; let us get away!"

Her hurry is over, as soon as they have passed out of the Close. They go, arm in arm now, gravely and deliberately enough, along the old High Street, to the Nuns'



House. At the gate, the street being within sight empty, Edwin bends down his face to Rosebud's.

She remonstrates, laughing, and is a childish school-girl again.

"Eddy, no! I'm too sticky to be kissed. But give me your hand, and I'll blow a kiss into that."

He does so. She breathes a light breath into it, and asks, retaining it and looking into it, —

"Now say, what do you see?"

"See, Rosa?"

"Why, I thought you Egyptian boys could look into a hand and see all sorts of phantoms? Can't you see a happy Future?"

For certain, neither of them sees a happy Present, as the gate opens and closes, and one goes in and the other goes away.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. SAPSEA.

ACCEPTING the Jackass as the type of self-sufficient stupidity and conceit, — a custom, perhaps, like some few other customs, more conventional than fair, — then the purest Jackass in Cloisterham is Mr. Thomas Sapsea, Auctioneer.

Mr. Sapsea “dresses at” the Dean; has been bowed to for the Dean, in mistake; has even been spoken to in the street as My Lord, under the impression that he was the Bishop come down unexpectedly, without his chaplain. Mr. Sapsea is very proud of this, and of his voice, and of his style. He has even (in selling landed property) tried the experiment of slightly intoning in his pulpit, to make himself more like what he takes to be the genuine ecclesiastical article. So, in ending a Sale by Public Auction, Mr. Sapsea finishes off with an air of bestowing a benediction on the assembled brokers, which leaves the real Dean — a modest and worthy gentleman — far behind.

Mr. Sapsea has many admirers; indeed, the proposition is carried by a large local majority, even including non-believers in his wisdom, that he is a credit to Cloisterham. He possesses the great qualities of being portentous and dull, and of having a roll in his speech, and another roll in his gait; not to mention a certain gravely flowing action with his hands, as if he were presently going to Confirm the individual with whom he holds discourse. Much nearer sixty years of age than fifty, with a flowing outline of stomach, and horizontal creases in his waistcoat; reputed to be rich; voting at elections in the strictly respectable interest; morally satisfied that nothing but he himself has grown since he was a baby; how can dunder-headed Mr. Sapsea be otherwise than a credit to Cloisterham, and society?

Mr. Sapsea's premises are in the High Street, over

against the Nuns' House. They are of about the period of the Nuns' House, irregularly modernized here and there, as steadily deteriorating generations found, more and more, that they preferred air and light to Fever and the Plague. Over the doorway is a wooden effigy, about half life-size, representing Mr. Sapsea's father, in a curly wig and toga, in the act of selling. The chastity of the idea, and the natural appearance of the little finger, hammer, and pulpit, have been much admired.

Mr. Sapsea sits in his dull, ground-floor sitting-room, giving first on his paved back yard, and then on his railed-off garden. Mr. Sapsea has a bottle of port wine on a table before the fire, — the fire is an early luxury, but pleasant on a cool, chilly autumn evening, — and is characteristically attended by his portrait, his eight-day clock, and his weather-glass. Characteristically, because he would uphold himself against mankind, his weather-glass against weather, and his clock against time.

By Mr. Sapsea's side on the table are a writing-desk and writing materials. Glancing at a scrap of manuscript, Mr. Sapsea reads it to himself with a lofty air, and then, slowly pacing the room with his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, repeats it from memory : so internally, though with much dignity, that the word "Ethelinda" is alone audible.

There are three clean wineglasses in a tray on the table. His serving-maid entering, and announcing "Mr. Jasper is come, sir," Mr. Sapsea waves, "Admit him," and draws two wineglasses from the rank, as being claimed.

"Glad to see you, sir. I congratulate myself on having the honor of receiving you here for the first time." Mr. Sapsea does the honors of his house in this wise.

"You are very good. The honor is mine and the self-congratulation is mine."

"You are pleased to say so, sir. But I do assure you that it is a satisfaction to me to receive you in my humble home. And that is what I would not say to everybody." Ineffable loftiness on Mr. Sapsea's part accompanies these words, as leaving the sentence to be understood : "You will not easily believe that your society can be a satisfaction to a man like myself ; nevertheless, it is."

"I have for some time desired to know you, Mr. Sapsea."

"And I, sir, have long known you by reputation as a man of taste. Let me fill your glass. I will give you, sir," says Mr. Sapsea, filling his own, —

"When the French come over,
May we meet them at Dover!"

This was a patriotic toast in Mr. Sapsea's infancy, and he is therefore fully convinced of its being appropriate to any subsequent era.

"You can scarcely be ignorant, Mr. Sapsea," observes Jasper, watching the auctioneer with a smile, as the latter stretches out his legs before the fire, "that you know the world."

"Well, sir," is the chuckling reply, "I think I know something of it, — something of it."

"Your reputation for that knowledge has always interested and surprised me, and made me wish to know you. For, Cloisterham is a little place. Cooped up in it myself, I know nothing beyond it, and feel it to be a very little place."

"If I have not gone to foreign countries, young man," Mr. Sapsea begins, and then stops, — "You will excuse my calling you young man, Mr. Jasper? You are much my junior."

"By all means."

"If I have not gone to foreign countries, young man, foreign countries have come to me. They have come to me in the way of business, and I have improved upon my opportunities. Put it that I take an inventory, or make a catalogue. I see a French clock. I never saw him before in my life, but I instantly lay my finger on him and say 'Paris.' I see some cups and saucers of Chinese make, equally strangers to me personally: I put my finger on them, then and there, and I say 'Pekin, Nankin, and Canton.' It is the same with Japan, with Egypt, and with bamboo and sandal-wood from the East Indies; I put my finger on them all. I have put my finger on the North Pole before now, and said, 'Spear of Esquimaux make, for half a pint of pale sherry!'"

"Really? A very remarkable way, Mr. Sapsea, of acquiring a knowledge of men and things."

"I mention it, sir," Mr. Sapsea rejoins with unspeakable complacency, "because, as I say, it don't do to boast of what you are; but show how you came to be it, and then you prove it."

"Most interesting. We were to speak of the late Mrs. Sapsea."

"We were, sir." Mr. Sapsea fills both glasses, and takes the decanter into safe-keeping again. "Before I consult your opinion as a man of taste on this little trifle,"—holding it up,—"*which is but* a trifle, and still has required some thought, sir, some little fever of the brow, I ought perhaps to describe the character of the late Mrs. Sapsea, now dead three quarters of a year."

Mr. Jasper, in the act of yawning behind his wine-glass, puts down that screen and calls up a look of interest. It is a little impaired in its expressiveness by his having a shut-up gape still to dispose of, with watering eyes.

"Half a dozen years ago, or so," Mr. Sapsea proceeds, "when I had enlarged my mind up to—I will not say to what it now is, for that might seem to aim at too much, but up to the pitch of wanting another mind to be absorbed in it—I cast my eye about me for a nuptial partner. Because, as I say, it is not good for man to be alone."

Mr. Jasper appears to commit this original idea to memory.

"Miss Brobity at that time kept, I will not call it the rival establishment to the establishment at the Nuns' House opposite, but I will call it the other parallel establishment down town. The world did have it that she showed a passion for attending my sales, when they took place on half-holidays, or in vacation time. The world did put it about that she admired my style. The world did notice that, as time flowed by, my style became traceable in the dictation-exercises of Miss Brobity's pupils. Young man, a whisper even sprang up in obscure malignity, that one ignorant and besotted Churl (a parent) so committed himself as to object to it by name. But I do not believe this. For is it likely that any

human creature in his right senses would so lay himself open to be pointed at, by what I call the finger of scorn ? ”

Mr. Jasper shakes his head. Not in the least likely. Mr. Sapsea, in a grandiloquent state of absence of mind, seems to refill his visitor's glass, which is full already, and does really refill his own, which is empty.

“ Miss Brobity's Being, young man, was deeply imbued with homage to Mind. She revered Mind, when launched, or, as I say, precipitated, on an extensive knowledge of the world. When I made my proposal, she did me the honor to be so overshadowed with a species of Awe, as to be able to articulate only the two words, ‘ O Thou ! ’ — meaning myself. Her limpid blue eyes were fixed upon me, her semi-transparent hands were clasped together, pallor overspread her aquiline features, and, though encouraged to proceed, she never did proceed a word further. I disposed of the parallel establishment, by private contract, and we became as nearly one as could be expected under the circumstances. But she never could, and she never did, find a phrase satisfactory to her perhaps-too-favorable estimate of my intellect. To the very last (feeble action of liver), she addressed me in the same unfinished terms.”

Mr. Jasper has closed his eyes as the auctioneer has deepened his voice. He now abruptly opens them, and says, in unison with the deepened voice, “ Ah ! ” — rather as if stopping himself on the extreme verge of adding — “ men ! ”

“ I have been since,” says Mr. Sapsea, with his legs stretched out, and solemnly enjoying himself with the wine and the fire, “ what you behold me ; I have been since a solitary mourner ; I have been since, as I say, wasting my evening conversation on the desert air. I will not say that I have reproached myself ; but there have been times when I have asked myself the question, What if her husband had been nearer on a level with her ? If she had not had to look up quite so high, what might the stimulating action have been upon the liver ? ”

Mr. Jasper says, with an appearance of having fallen into dreadfully low spirits, that he “ supposes it was to be.”

“We can only suppose so, sir,” Mr. Sapsea coincides. “As I say, Man proposes, Heaven disposes. It may or may not be putting the same thought in another form; but that is the way I put it.”

Mr. Jasper murmurs assent.

“And now, Mr. Jasper,” resumes the auctioneer, producing his scrap of manuscript, “Mrs. Sapsea’s monument having had full time to settle and dry, let me take your opinion, as a man of taste, on the inscription I have (as I before remarked, not without some little fever of the brow) drawn out for it. Take it in your own hand. The setting out of the lines requires to be followed with the eye, as well as the contents with the mind.”

Mr. Jasper, complying, sees and reads as follows:—

ETHELINDA,
 Reverential Wife of
 MR. THOMAS SAPSEA,
 AUCTIONEER, VALUER, ESTATE AGENT, &C.,
 OF THIS CITY.
 Whose Knowledge of the World,
 Though somewhat extensive,
 Never brought him acquainted with
 A SPIRIT
 More capable of
 LOOKING UP TO HIM.
 STRANGER, PAUSE
 And ask thyself the Question,
 CANST THOU DO LIKEWISE?
 If Not,
 WITH A BLUSH RETIRE.

Mr. Sapsea having risen and stationed himself with his back to the fire, for the purpose of observing the effect of these lines on the countenance of a man of taste, consequently has his face towards the door, when his serving-maid, again appearing, announces, “Durdles is come, sir!” He promptly draws forth and fills the third wineglass, as being now claimed, and replies, “Show Durdles in.”

“Admirable!” quoth Mr. Jasper, handing back the paper.

“ You approve, sir ? ”

“ Impossible not to approve. Striking, characteristic, and complete.”

The auctioneer inclines his head, as one accepting his due and giving a receipt, and invites the entering Durdles to take off that glass of wine (handing the same), for it will warm him.

Durdles is a stone mason ; chiefly in the gravestone, tomb, and monument way, and wholly of their color from head to foot. No man is better known in Cloisterham. He is the chartered libertine of the place. Fame trumpets him a wonderful workman, — which, for aught that anybody knows, he may be (as he never works) ; and a wonderful sot, — which everybody knows he is. With the Cathedral crypt he is better acquainted than any living authority ; it may even be than any dead one. It is said that the intimacy of this acquaintance began in his habitually resorting to that secret place, to lock out the Cloisterham boy-populace, and sleep off the fumes of liquor, he having ready access to the Cathedral, as contractor for rough repairs. Be this as it may, he does know much about it, and, in the demolition of impedimental fragments of wall, buttress, and pavement, has seen strange sights. He often speaks of himself in the third person ; perhaps being a little misty as to his own identity when he narrates ; perhaps impartially adopting the Cloisterham nomenclature in reference to a character of acknowledged distinction. Thus he will say, touching his strange sights, “ Durdles come upon the old chap,” in reference to a buried magnate of ancient time and high degree, “ by striking right into the coffin with his pick. The old chap gave Durdles a look with his open eyes, as much as to say, ‘ Is your name Durdles ? Why, my man, I ’ve been waiting for you a Devil of a time ! ’ And then he turned to powder.” With a two-foot rule always in his pocket, and a mason’s hammer all but always in his hand, Durdles goes continually sounding and tapping all about and about the Cathedral ; and whenever he says to Tope, “ Tope, here ’s another old ’un in here ! ” Tope announces it to the Dean as an established discovery.

In a suit of coarse flannel with horn buttons, a yellow

neckerchief with draggled ends, an old hat more russet-colored than black, and laced boots of the hue of his stony calling, Durdles leads a hazy, gypsy sort of life, carrying his dinner about with him in a small bundle, and sitting on all manner of tombstones to dine. This dinner of Durdles's has become quite a Cloisterham institution; not only because of his never appearing in public without it, but because of its having been, on certain renowned occasions, taken into custody along with Durdles (as drunk and incapable), and exhibited before the Bench of Justices at the Town Hall. These occasions, however, have been few and far apart, Durdles being as seldom drunk as sober. For the rest, he is an old bachelor, and he lives in a little antiquated hole of a house that was never finished, supposed to be built, so far, of stones stolen from the city wall. To this abode there is an approach, ankle-deep in stone chips, resembling a petrified grove of tombstones, urns, draperies, and broken columns, in all stages of sculpture. Herein, two journeymen incessantly chip, while other two journeymen, who face each other, incessantly saw stone, dipping as regularly in and out of their sheltering sentry-boxes, as if they were mechanical figures emblematical of Time and Death.

To Durdles, when he has consumed his glass of port, Mr. Sapsea intrusts that precious effort of his Muse. Durdles unfeelingly takes out his two-foot rule, and measures the lines calmly, alloying them with stone-grit.

"This is for the monument, is it, Mr. Sapsea?"

"The inscription. Yes." Mr. Sapsea waits for its effect on a common mind.

"It'll come in to a eighth of a inch," says Durdles.

"Your servant, Mr. Jasper. Hope I see you well."

"How are you, Durdles?"

"I've got a touch of the Tombatism on me, Mr. Jasper, but that I must expect."

"You mean the Rheumatism," says Sapsea, in a sharp tone. (He is nettled by having his composition so mechanically received.)

"No, I don't. I mean, Mr. Sapsea, the Tombatism. It's another sort from Rheumatism. Mr. Jasper knows what Durdles means. You get among them Tombs afore it's well light on a winter morning, and keep on, as the

Catechism says, a walking in the same all the days of your life, and *you* 'll know what Durdles means."

"It is a bitter cold place," Mr. Jasper assents, with an antipathetic shiver.

"And if it's bitter cold for you, up in the chancel, with a lot of live breath smoking out about you, what the bitterness is to Durdles, down in the crypt among the earthy damps there, and the dead breath of the old 'uns," returns that individual, "Durdles leaves you to judge. — Is this to be put in hand at once, Mr. Sapsea?"

Mr. Sapsea, with an Author's anxiety to rush into publication, replies that it cannot be out of hand too soon.

"You had better let me have the key, then," says Durdles.

"Why, man, it is not to be put inside the monument!"

"Durdles knows where it's to be put, Mr. Sapsea; no man better. Ask 'ere a man in Cloisterham whether Durdles knows his work."

Mr. Sapsea rises, takes a key from a drawer, unlocks an iron safe let into the wall, and takes from it another key.

"When Durdles puts a touch or a finish upon his work, no matter where, inside or outside, Durdles likes to look at his work all round, and see that his work is a doing him credit," Durdles explains, doggedly.

The key proffered him by the bereaved widower being a large one, he slips his two-foot rule into a side pocket of his flannel trousers made for it, and deliberately opens his flannel coat, and opens the mouth of a large breast-pocket within it before taking the key to place in that repository.

"Why, Durdles!" exclaims Jasper, looking on amused. "You are undermined with pockets!"

"And I carries weight in 'em too, Mr. Jasper. Feel those," producing two other large keys.

"Hand me Mr. Sapsea's likewise. Surely this is the heaviest of the three."

"You 'll find 'em much of a muchness, I expect," says Durdles. "They all belong to monuments. They all open Durdles's work. Durdles keeps the keys of his work mostly. Not that they 're much used."

"By the by," it comes into Jasper's mind to say, as he idly examines the keys, "I have been going to ask

you, many a day, and have always forgotten. You know they sometimes call you Stony Durdles, don't you?"

"Cloisterham knows me as Durdles, Mr. Jasper."

"I am aware of that, of course. But the boys sometimes —"

"Oh! If you mind them young Imps of boys —" Durdles gruffly interrupts.

"I don't mind them any more than you do. But there was a discussion the other day among the Choir, whether Stony stood for Tony"; clinking one key against another.

("Take care of the wards, Mr. Jasper.")

"Or whether Stony stood for Stephen"; clinking with change of keys.

("You can't make a pitch-pipe of 'em, Mr. Jasper.")

"Or whether the name comes from your trade. How stands the fact?"

Mr. Jasper weighs the three keys in his hand, lifts his head from his idly stooping attitude over the fire, and delivers the keys to Durdles with an ingenuous and friendly face.

But the stony one is a gruff one likewise, and that hazy state of his is always an uncertain state, highly conscious of its dignity, and prone to take offence. He drops his two keys back into his pocket one by one, and buttons them up; he takes his dinner-bundle from the chair-back on which he hung it when he came in; he distributes the weight he carries, by tying the third key up in it, as though he were an Ostrich, and liked to dine off cold iron; and he gets out of the room, deigning no word of answer.

Mr. Sapsea then proposes a hit at backgammon, which, seasoned with his own improving conversation, and terminating in a supper of cold roast beef and salad, beguiles the golden evening until pretty late. Mr. Sapsea's wisdom being, in its delivery to mortals, rather of the diffuse than the epigrammatic order, is by no means expended even then; but his visitor intimates that he will come back for more of the precious commodity on future occasions, and Mr. Sapsea lets him off for the present, to ponder on the instalment he carries away.

CHAPTER V.

MR. DURDLES AND FRIEND.

JOHN JASPER, on his way home through the Close, is brought to a standstill by the spectacle of Stony Durdles, dinner-bundle and all, leaning his back against the iron railing of the burial-ground enclosing it from the old cloister-arches; and a hideous small boy in rags flinging stones at him as a well-defined mark in the moonlight. Sometimes the stones hit him, and sometimes they miss him, but Durdles seems indifferent to either fortune. The hideous small boy, on the contrary, whenever he hits Durdles, blows a whistle of triumph through a jagged gap convenient for the purpose, in the front of his mouth, where half his teeth are wanting; and whenever he misses him, yelps out "Mulled agin!" and tries to atone for the failure by taking a more correct and vicious aim.

"What are you doing to the man?" demands Jasper, stepping out into the moonlight from the shade.

"Making a cock-shy of him," replies the hideous small boy.

"Give me those stones in your hand."

"Yes, I'll give 'em you down your throat, if you come a ketching hold of me," says the small boy, shaking himself loose, and backing. "I'll smash your eye, if you don't look out!"

"Baby-Devil that you are, what has the man done to you?"

"He won't go home."

"What is that to you?"

"He gives me 'apenny to pelt him home if I ketches him out too late," says the boy. And then chants like a little savage, half stumbling and half dancing among the rags and laces of his dilapidated boots, —

“ Widdy widdy wen !
 I — ket — ches — Im — out — ar — ter — ten,
 Widdy widdy wy !
 Then — E — don't — go — then — I — shy —
 Widdy Widdy Wake-cock warning ! ”

— with a comprehensive sweep on the last word, and one more delivery at Durdles.

This would seem to be a poetical note of preparation, agreed upon as a caution to Durdles to stand clear if he can, or to betake himself homeward.

John Jasper invites the boy with a beck of his head to follow him (feeling it hopeless to drag him, or coax him) and crosses to the iron railing where the Stony (and stoned) One is profoundly meditating.

“ Do you know this thing, this child ? ” asks Jasper, at a loss for a word that will define this thing.

“ Deputy,” says Durdles, with a nod.

“ Is that its — his — name ? ”

“ Deputy,” assents Durdles.

“ I'm man-servant up at the Travellers' Twopenny in Gas Works Garding,” this thing explains. “ All us man-servants at Travellers Lodgings is named Deputy. When we're chock full and the Travellers is all a-bed I come out for my 'elth.” Then, withdrawing into the road, and taking aim, he resumes, —

“ Widdy widdy wen !
 I — ket — ches — Im — out — ar — ter — ”

“ Hold your hand,” cries Jasper, “ and don't throw while I stand so near him, or I'll kill you ! Come, Durdles ; let me walk home with you to-night. Shall I carry your bundle ? ”

“ Not on any account,” replies Durdles, adjusting it. “ Durdles was making his reflections here when you come up, sir, surrounded by his works, like a poplar Author — Your own brother-in-law ” ; introducing a sarcophagus within the railing, white and cold in the moonlight. “ Mrs. Sapsea ” ; introducing the monument of that devoted wife. “ Late Incumbent ” ; introducing the Reverend Gentleman's broken column. “ Departed Assessed Taxes ” ; introducing a vase and towel, standing on what might represent the cake of soap. “ Former pastry-cook and muffin-maker, much respected ” ; introducing grave-

stone. "All safe and sound here, sir, and all Durdles's work! Of the common folk that is merely bundled up in turf and brambles, the less said, the better. A poor lot, soon forgot."

"This creature, Deputy, is behind us," says Jasper, looking back. "Is he to follow us?"

The relations between Durdles and Deputy are of a capricious kind; for, on Durdles's turning himself about with the slow gravity of beery soddenness, Deputy makes a pretty wide circuit into the road and stands on the defensive.

"You never cried Widdy Warning before you begun to-night," says Durdles, unexpectedly reminded of, or imagining, an injury.

"Yer lie, I did," says Deputy, in his only form of polite contradiction.

"Own brother, sir," observes Durdles, turning himself about again, and as unexpectedly forgetting his offence as he had recalled or conceived it, — "own brother to Peter the Wild Boy! But I gave him an object in life."

"At which he takes aim?" Mr. Jasper suggests.

"That's it, sir," returns Durdles, quite satisfied; "at which he takes aim. I took him in hand and gave him an object. What was he before? A destroyer. What work did he do? Nothing but destruction. What did he earn by it? Short terms in Cloisterham Jail. Not a person, not a piece of property, not a winder, not a horse, nor a dog, nor a cat, nor a bird, nor a fowl, nor a pig, but what he stoned for want of an enlightened object. I put that enlightened object before him, and now he can turn his honest halfpenny by the three penn'orth a week."

"I wonder he has no competitors."

"He has plenty, Mr. Jasper, but he stones 'em all away. Now, I don't know what this scheme of mine comes to," pursues Durdles, considering about it with the same sodden gravity; "I don't know what you may precisely call it. It ain't a sort of a — scheme of a — National Education?"

"I should say not," replies Jasper.

"I should say not," assents Durdles; "then we won't try to give it a name."

"He still keeps behind us," repeats Jasper, looking over his shoulder; "is he to follow us?"

"We can't help going round by the Travellers' Two-penny, if we go the short way, which is the back way," Durdles answers, "and we 'll drop him there."

So they go on; Deputy, as a rear rank of one, taking open order, and invading the silence of the hour and place by stoning every wall, post, pillar, and other inanimate object, by the deserted way.

"Is there anything new down in the crypt, Durdles?" asks John Jasper.

"Anything old, I think you mean," growls Durdles. "It ain't a spot for novelty."

"Any new discovery on your part, I meant."

"There's a old 'un under the seventh pillar on the left as you go down the broken steps of the little underground chapel as formerly was, I make him out (so fur as I've made him out yet) to be one of them old 'uns with a crook. To judge from the size of the passages in the walls, and of the steps and doors, by which they come and went, them crooks must have been a good deal in the way of the old 'uns! Two on 'em meeting promiscuous must have hitched one another by the mitre, pretty often, I should say."

Without any endeavor to correct the literality of this opinion, Jasper surveys his companion — covered from head to foot with old mortar, lime, and stone grit — as though he, Jasper, were getting imbued with a romantic interest in his weird life.

"Yours is a curious existence."

Without furnishing the least clew to the question, whether he receives this as a compliment or as quite the reverse, Durdles gruffly answers, "Yours is another."

"Well! Inasmuch as my lot is cast in the same old earthy, chilly, never-changing place, Yes. But there is much more mystery and interest in your connection with the Cathedral than in mine. Indeed, I am beginning to have some idea of asking you to take me on as a sort of student, or free 'prentice, under you, and to let me go about with you sometimes, and see some of these odd nooks in which you pass your days."

The Stony One replies, in a general way, All right.

Everybody knows where to find Durdles when he's wanted. Which, if not strictly true, is approximately so, if taken to express that Durdles may always be found in a state of vagabondage somewhere.

"What I dwell upon most," says Jasper, pursuing his subject of romantic interest, "is the remarkable accuracy with which you would seem to find out where people are buried — What is the matter? That bundle is in your way; let me hold it."

Durdles has stopped and backed a little (Deputy, attentive to all his movements, immediately skirmishing into the road), and was looking about for some ledge or corner to place his bundle on, when thus relieved of it.

"Just you give me my hammer out of that," says Durdles, "and I'll show you."

Clink, clink. And his hammer is handed him.

"Now, lookee here. You pitch your note, don't you, Mr. Jasper?"

"Yes."

"So I sound for mine. I take my hammer, and I tap." (Here he strikes the pavement, and the attentive Deputy skirmishes at a rather wider range, as supposing that his head may be in requisition.) "I tap, tap, tap. Solid! I go on tapping. Solid still! Tap again. Holloa! Hollow! Tap again, persevering. Solid in hollow! tap, tap, tap, to try it better. Solid in hollow; and inside solid, hollow again! There you are! Old 'un crumbled away in stone coffin, in vault!"

"Astonishing!"

"I have even done this," says Durdles, drawing out his two-foot rule (Deputy meanwhile skirmishing nearer, as suspecting that Treasure may be about to be discovered, which may somehow lead to his own enrichment, and the delicious treat of the discoverers being hanged by the neck, on his evidence, until they are dead). "Say that hammer of mine's a wall — my work. Two; four; and two is six," measuring on the pavement. "Six foot inside that wall is Mrs. Sapsea."

"Not really Mrs. Sapsea?"

"Say Mrs. Sapsea. Her wall's thicker, but say Mrs. Sapsea. Durdles taps that wall represented by that hammer, and says, after good sounding, 'Something be

twixt us !' Sure enough, some rubbish has been left in that same six-foot space by Durdles's men ! "

Jasper opines that such accuracy " is a gift."

" I would n't have it at a gift," returns Durdles, by no means receiving the observation in good part. " I worked it out for myself. Durdles comes by *his* knowledge through grubbing deep for it, and having it up by the roots when it don't want to come. — Halloa, you Deputy ! "

" Widdy ! " is Deputy's shrill response, standing off again.

" Catch that ha'penny. And don't let me see any more of you to-night, after we come to the Travellers' Twopenny."

" Warning ! " returns Deputy, having caught the halfpenny, and appearing by this mystic word to express his assent to the arrangement.

They have but to cross what was once the vineyard, belonging to what was once the Monastery, to come into the narrow back lane wherein stands the crazy wooden house of two low stories currently known as the Travellers' Twopenny, — a house all warped and distorted, like the morals of the travellers, with scant remains of a latticework porch over the door, and also of a rustic fence before its stamped-out garden ; by reason of the travellers being so bound to the premises by a tender sentiment (or so fond of having a fire by the roadside in the course of the day), that they can never be persuaded or threatened into departure, without violently possessing themselves of some wooden forget-me-not, and bearing it off.

The semblance of an inn is attempted to be given to this wretched place by fragments of conventional red curtaining in the windows, which rags are made muddily transparent in the night-season by feeble lights of rush or cotton dip burning dully in the close air of the inside. As Durdles and Jasper come near, they are addressed by an inscribed paper lantern over the door, setting forth the purport of the house. They are also addressed by some half-dozen other hideous small boys, — whether twopenny lodgers or followers or hangers-on of such, who knows ! — who, as if attracted by some carrion-scent of Deputy in the air, start into the moonlight, as vultures

might gather in the desert, and instantly fall to stoning him and one another.

"Stop, you young brutes," cries Jasper, angrily, "and let us go by!"

This remonstrance being received with yells and flying stones, according to a custom of late years comfortably established among the police regulations of our English communities, where Christians are stoned on all sides, as if the days of Saint Stephen were revived, Durdles remarks of the young savages, with some point, that "they have n't got an object," and leads the way down the lane.

At the corner of the lane, Jasper, hotly enraged, checks his companion and looks back. All is silent. Next moment, a stone coming rattling at his hat, and a distant yell of "Wake-Cock! Warning!" followed by a crow, as from some infernally hatched Chanticleer, apprising him under whose victorious fire he stands, he turns the corner into safety, and takes Durdles home: Durdles stumbling among the litter of his stony yard as if he were going to turn headforemost into one of the unfinished tombs.

John Jasper returns by another way to his gate house, and, entering softly with his key, finds his fire still burning. He takes from a locked press a peculiar-looking pipe, which he fills, — but not with tobacco, — and, having adjusted the contents of the bowl, very carefully, with a little instrument, ascends an inner staircase of only a few steps, leading to two rooms. One of these is his own sleeping-chamber, the other is his nephew's. There is a light in each.

His nephew lies asleep, calm and untroubled. John Jasper stands looking down upon him, his unlighted pipe in his hand, for some time, with a fixed and deep attention. Then, hushing his footsteps, he passes to his own room, lights his pipe, and delivers himself to the Spectres it invokes at midnight.

CHAPTER VI.

PHILANTHROPY IN MINOR CANON CORNER.

THE Reverend Septimus Crisparkle (Septimus, because six little brother Crisparkles before him went out, one by one, as they were born, like six weak little rushlights, as they were lighted) having broken the thin morning ice near Cloisterham Weir with his amiable head, much to the invigoration of his frame, was now assisting his circulation by boxing at a looking-glass with great science and prowess. A fresh and healthy portrait the looking-glass presented of the Reverend Septimus, feinting and dodging with the utmost artfulness, and hitting out from the shoulder with the utmost straightness, while his radiant features teemed with innocence, and soft-hearted benevolence beamed from his boxing-gloves.

It was scarcely breakfast-time yet, for Mrs. Crisparkle — mother, not wife, of the Reverend Septimus — was only just down, and waiting for the urn. Indeed, the Reverend Septimus left off at this very moment to take the pretty old lady's entering face between his boxing-gloves and kiss it. Having done so with tenderness, the Reverend Septimus turned to again, countering with his left, and putting in his right, in a tremendous manner.

"I say, every morning of my life, that you 'll do it at last, Sept," remarked the old lady, looking on; "and so you will."

"Do what, Ma dear?"

"Break the pier-glass, or burst a blood-vessel."

"Neither, please God, Ma dear. Here's wind, Ma. Look at this!"

In a concluding round of great severity, the Reverend Septimus administered and escaped all sorts of punishment, and wound up by getting the old lady's cap into Chancery — such is the technical term used in scientific circles by

the learned in the Noble Art — with a lightness of touch that hardly stirred the lightest lavender or cherry riband on it. Magnanimously releasing the defeated, just in time to get his gloves into a drawer, and feign to be looking out of window in a contemplative state of mind when a servant entered, the Reverend Septimus then gave place to the urn and other preparations for breakfast. These completed, and the two alone again, it was pleasant to see (or would have been, if there had been any one to see it, which there never was) the old lady standing to say the Lord's Prayer aloud, and her son, Minor Canon nevertheless, standing with head bent to hear it, he being within five years of forty: much as he had stood to hear the same words from the same lips when he was within five months of four.

What is prettier than an old lady — except a young lady — when her eyes are bright, when her figure is trim and compact, when her face is cheerful and calm, when her dress is as the dress of a china shepherdess: so dainty in its colors, so individually assorted to herself, so neatly moulded on her? Nothing is prettier, thought the good Minor Canon frequently, when taking his seat at table opposite his long-widowed mother. Her thought at such times may be condensed into the two words that oftenest did duty together in all her conversations: "My Sept!"

They were a good pair to sit breakfasting together in Minor Canon Corner, Cloisterham. For Minor Canon Corner was a quiet place in the shadow of the Cathedral, which the cawing of the rooks, the echoing footsteps of rare passers, the sound of the Cathedral bell, or the roll of the Cathedral organ, seemed to render more quiet than absolute silence. Swaggering fighting men had had their centuries of ramping and raving about Minor Canon Corner, and beaten serfs had had their centuries of drudging and dying there, and powerful monks had had their centuries of being sometimes useful and sometimes harmful there, and behold they were all gone out of Minor Canon Corner, and so much the better. Perhaps one of the highest uses of there ever having been there, was, that there might be left behind that blessed air of tranquillity which pervaded Minor Canon Corner, and that serenely romantic state of the mind — productive for the most part of pity

and forbearance — which is engendered by a sorrowful story that is all told, or a pathetic play that is played out.

Red-brick walls harmoniously toned down in color by time, strong-rooted ivy, latticed windows, panelled rooms, big oaken beams in little places, and stone-walled gardens where annual fruit yet ripened upon monkish trees, were the principal surroundings of pretty old Mrs. Crisparkle and the Reverend Septimus as they sat at breakfast.

“And what, Ma dear,” inquired the Minor Canon, giving proof of a wholesome and vigorous appetite, “does the letter say?”

The pretty old lady, after reading it, had just laid it down upon the breakfast-cloth. She handed it over to her son.

Now the old lady was exceedingly proud of her bright eyes being so clear that she could read writing without spectacles. Her son was also so proud of the circumstance, and so dutifully bent on her deriving the utmost possible gratification from it, that he had invented the pretence that he himself could *not* read writing without spectacles. Therefore he now assumed a pair, of grave and prodigious proportions, which not only seriously inconvenienced his nose and his breakfast, but seriously impeded his perusal of the letter. For he had the eyes of a microscope and a telescope combined, when they were unassisted.

“It’s from Mr. Honeythunder, of course,” said the old lady, folding her arms.

“Of course,” assented her son. He then lamely read on: —

“Haven of Philanthropy,
Chief Offices, London, Wednesday.

“DEAR MADAM, —

“‘I write in the —’ In the what’s this? What does he write in?”

“In the chair,” said the old lady.

The Reverend Septimus took off his spectacles, that he might see her face, as he exclaimed, —

“Why, what should he write in?”

“Bless me, bless me, Sept,” returned the old lady, “you don’t see the context! Give it back to me, my dear.”

“Glad to get his spectacles off (for they always made his eyes water), her son obeyed, murmuring that his sight for reading manuscript got worse and worse daily.

“‘I write,’” his mother went on, reading very conspicuously and precisely, “‘from the chair, to which I shall probably be confined for some hours.’”

Septimus looked at the row of chairs against the wall, with a half-protesting and half-appealing countenance.

“‘We have,’” the old lady read on with a little extra emphasis, “‘a meeting of our Convened Chief Composite Committee of Central and District Philanthropists, at our Head Haven as above; and it is their unanimous pleasure that I take the chair.’”

Septimus breathed more freely, and muttered, “Oh! If he comes to *that*, let him.”

“‘Not to lose a day’s post, I take the opportunity of a long report being read, denouncing a public miscreant—’”

“It is a most extraordinary thing,” interposed the gentle Minor Canon, laying down his knife and fork to rub his ear in a vexed manner, “that these Philanthropists are always denouncing somebody. And it is another most extraordinary thing that they are always so violently flush of miscreants!”

“‘Denouncing a public miscreant!’” — the old lady resumed, “‘to get our little affair of business off my mind. I have spoken with my two wards, Neville and Helena Landless, on the subject of their defective education, and they give in to the plan proposed; as I should have taken good care they did, whether they liked it or not.’”

“And it is another most extraordinary thing,” remarked the Minor Canon in the same tone as before, “that these Philanthropists are so given to seizing their fellow-creatures by the scruff of the neck, and (as one may say) bumping them into the paths of peace. — I beg your pardon, Ma, dear, for interrupting.”

“‘Therefore, dear Madam, you will please prepare your son, the Rev. Mr. Septimus, to expect Neville, as an inmate to be read with, on Monday next. On the same day Helena will accompany him to Cloisterham, to take up her quarters at the Nuns’ House, the establishment recommended by yourself and son jointly. Please likewise to prepare for her reception and tuition there. The

terms in both cases are understood to be exactly as stated to me in writing by yourself, when I opened a correspondence with you on this subject, after the honor of being introduced to you at your sister's house in town here. With compliments to the Rev. Mr. Septimus, I am, Dear Madam, your affectionate brother (In Philanthropy), LUKE HONEYTHUNDER.' "

" Well, Ma," said Septimus, after a little more rubbing of his ear, " we must try it. There can be no doubt that we have room for an inmate, and that I have time to bestow upon him, and inclination too. I must confess to feeling rather glad that he is not Mr. Honeythunder himself. Though that seems wretchedly prejudiced, — does it not? — for I never saw him. Is he a large man, Ma? "

" I should call him a large man, my dear," the old lady replied, after some hesitation, " but that his voice is so much larger."

" Than himself? "

" Than anybody."

" Hah! " said Septimus. And finished his breakfast as if the flavor of the Superior Family Souchong, and also of the ham and toast and eggs, were a little on the wane.

Mrs. Crisparkle's sister, another piece of Dresden china, and matching her so neatly that they would have made a delightful pair of ornaments for the two ends of any capacious old-fashioned chimney-piece, and by right should never have been seen apart, was the childless wife of a clergyman holding Corporation preferment in London City. Mr. Honeythunder, in his public character of Professor of Philanthropy, had come to know Mrs. Crisparkle during the last rematching of the china ornaments (in other words, during her last annual visit to her sister), after a public occasion of a philanthropic nature, when certain devoted orphans of tender years had been glutted with plum buns, and plump bumptiousness. These were all the antecedents known in Minor Canon Corner of the coming pupils.

" I am sure you will agree with me, Ma," said Mr. Crisparkle, after thinking the matter over, " that the first thing to be done, is, to put these young people as much at their ease as possible. There is nothing disinterested

in the notion, because we cannot be at our ease with them unless they are at their ease with us. Now, Jasper's nephew is down here at present; and like takes to like, and youth takes to youth. He is a cordial young fellow, and we will have him to meet the brother and sister at dinner. That's three. We can't think of asking him, without asking Jasper. That's four. Add Miss Twinkleton and the fairy bride that is to be, and that's six. Add our two selves, and that's eight. Would eight at a friendly dinner at all put you out, Ma?"

"Nine would, Sept," returned the old lady, visibly nervous.

"My dear Ma, I particularize eight."

"The exact size of the table and the room, my dear."

So it was settled that way; and when Mr. Crisparkle called with his mother upon Miss Twinkleton, to arrange for the reception of Miss Helena Landless at the Nuns' House, the two other invitations having reference to that establishment were proffered and accepted. Miss Twinkleton did, indeed, glance at the globes, as regretting that they were not formed to be taken out into society; but became reconciled to leaving them behind. Instructions were then despatched to the Philanthropist for the departure and arrival, in good time for dinner, of Mr. Neville and Miss Helena; and stock for soup became fragrant in the air of Minor Canon Corner.

In those days there was no railway to Cloisterham, and Mr. Sapsea said there never would be. Mr. Sapsea said more; he said there never should be. And yet, marvellous to consider, it has come to pass, in these days, that Express Trains don't think Cloisterham worth stopping at, but yell and whirl through it on their larger errands, casting the dust off their wheels as a testimony against its insignificance. Some remote fragment of Main Line to somewhere else, there was, which was going to ruin the Money Market if it failed, and Church and State if it succeeded, and (of course) the Constitution, whether or no; but even that had already so unsettled Cloisterham traffic, that the traffic, deserting the high-road, came sneaking in from an unprecedented part of the country by a back stable-way, for many years labelled at the corner: "Beware of the Dog."

To this ignominious avenue of approach, Mr. Crisparkle repaired, awaiting the arrival of a short squat omnibus, with a disproportionate heap of luggage on the roof, — like a little Elephant with infinitely too much Castle, — which was then the daily service between Cloisterham and external mankind. As this vehicle lumbered up, Mr. Crisparkle could hardly see anything else of it for a large outside passenger seated on the box, with his elbows squared, and his hands on his knees, compressing the driver into a most uncomfortably small compass, and glowering about him with a strongly marked face.

“Is this Cloisterham?” demanded the passenger, in a tremendous voice.

“It is,” replied the driver, rubbing himself as if he ached, after throwing the reins to the ostler. “And I never was so glad to see it.”

“Tell your master to make his box seat wider then,” returned the passenger. “Your master is morally bound — and ought to be legally, under ruinous penalties — to provide for the comfort of his fellow-man.”

The driver instituted, with the palms of his hands, a superficial perquisition into the state of his skeleton; which seemed to make him anxious.

“Have I sat upon you?” asked the passenger.

“You have,” said the driver, as if he didn’t like it at all.

“Take that card, my friend.”

“I think I won’t deprive you on it,” returned the driver, casting his eyes over it with no great favor, without taking it. “What’s the good of it to me?”

“Be a Member of that Society,” said the passenger.

“What shall I get by it?” asked the driver.

“Brotherhood,” returned the passenger, in a ferocious voice.

“Thankee,” said the driver, very deliberately, as he got down; “my mother was contented with myself, and so am I. I don’t want no brothers.”

“But you must have them,” replied the passenger, also descending, “whether you like it or not. I am your brother.”

“I say!” expostulated the driver, becoming more

chafed in temper; "not too far! The worm *will*, when —"

But here Mr. Crisparkle interposed, remonstrating aside, in a friendly voice, "Joe, Joe, Joe! Don't forget yourself, Joe, my good fellow!" and then, when Joe peaceably touched his hat, accosting the passenger with, "Mr. Honeythunder?"

"That is my name, sir."

"My name is Crisparkle."

"Reverend Mr. Septimus? Glad to see you, sir. Neville and Helena are inside. Having a little succumbed of late, under the pressure of my public labors, I thought I would take a mouthful of fresh air, and come down with them, and return at night. So you are the Reverend Mr. Septimus, are you?" surveying him on the whole with disappointment, and twisting a double eyeglass by its riband, as if he were roasting it; but not otherwise using it. "Hah! I expected to see you older, sir."

"I hope you will," was the good-humored reply.

"Eh?" demanded Mr. Honeythunder.

"Only a poor little joke. Not worth repeating."

"Joke? Ay; I never see a joke," Mr. Honeythunder frowningly retorted. "A joke is wasted upon me, sir. Where are they? Helena and Neville, come here! Mr. Crisparkle has come down to meet you."

An unusually handsome lithe young fellow, and an unusually handsome lithe girl; much alike; both very dark, and very rich in color; she of almost the gypsy type; something untamed about them both; a certain air upon them of hunter and huntress; yet withal a certain air of being the objects of the chase, rather than the followers. Slender, supple, quick of eye and limb; half shy, half defiant; fierce of look; an indefinable kind of pause coming and going on their whole expression, both of face and form, which might be equally likened to the pause before a crouch, or a bound. The rough mental notes made in the first five minutes by Mr. Crisparkle would have read thus, *verbatim*.

He invited Mr. Honeythunder to dinner, with a troubled mind (for the discomfiture of the dear old china shepherdess lay heavy on it), and gave his arm to Helena

Landless. Both she and her brother, as they walked all together through the ancient streets, took great delight in what he pointed out of the Cathedral and the Monastery-ruin, and wondered — so his notes ran on — much as if they were beautiful barbaric captives brought from some wild tropical dominion. Mr. Honeythunder walked in the middle of the road, shouldering the natives out of his way, and loudly developing a scheme he had, for making a raid on all the unemployed persons in the United Kingdom, laying them every one by the heels in jail, and forcing them, on pain of prompt extermination, to become philanthropists.

Mrs. Crisparkle had need of her own share of philanthropy when she beheld this very large and very loud excrescence on the little party. Always something in the nature of a Boil upon the face of society, Mr. Honeythunder expanded into an inflammatory Wen in Minor Canon Corner. Though it was not literally true, as was facetiously charged against him by public unbelievers, that he called aloud to his fellow-creatures, “Curse your souls and bodies, come here and be blessed!” still, his philanthropy was of that gunpowderous sort that the difference between it and animosity was hard to determine. You were to abolish military force, but you were first to bring all commanding officers who had done their duty to trial by court-martial for that offence, and shoot them. You were to abolish war, but were to make converts by making war upon them, and charging them with loving war as the apple of their eye. You were to have no capital punishment, but were first to sweep off the face of the earth all legislators, jurists, and judges who were of the contrary opinion. You were to have universal concord, and were to get it by eliminating all the people who would n’t, or conscientiously could n’t, be concordant. You were to love your brother as yourself, but after an indefinite interval of maligning him (very much as if you hated him), and calling him all manner of names. Above all things, you were to do nothing in private, or on your own account. You were to go to the offices of the Haven of Philanthropy, and put your name down as a Member and a Professing Philanthropist. Then you were to pay up your subscription, get your card of membership and

your riband and medal, and were evermore to live upon a platform, and evermore to say what Mr. Honeythunder said, and what the Treasurer said, and what the sub-Treasurer said, and what the Committee said, and what the sub-Committee said, and what the Secretary said, and what the Vice Secretary said. And this was usually said in the unanimously carried resolution under hand and seal, to the effect: "That this assembled Body of Professing Philanthropists views, with indignant scorn and contempt, not unmixed with utter detestation and loathing abhorrence,"—in short, the baseness of all those who do not belong to it, and pledges itself to make as many obnoxious statements as possible about them, without being at all particular as to facts.

The dinner was a most doleful breakdown. The philanthropist deranged the symmetry of the table, sat himself in the way of the waiting, blocked up the thoroughfare, and drove Mr. Tope (who assisted the parlor-maid) to the verge of distraction by passing plates and dishes on, over his own head. Nobody could talk to anybody, because he held forth to everybody at once, as if the company had no individual existence, but were a Meeting. He impounded the Reverend Mr. Septimus, as an official personage to be addressed, or kind of human peg to hang his oratorical hat on, and fell into the exasperating habit, common among such orators, of impersonating him as a wicked and weak opponent. Thus, he would ask, "And will you, sir, now stultify yourself by telling me"—and so forth, when the innocent man had not opened his lips, nor meant to open them. Or he would say, "Now see, sir, to what a position you are reduced. I will leave you no escape. After exhausting all the resources of fraud and falsehood, during years upon years; after exhibiting a combination of dastardly meanness with ensanguined daring, such as the world has not often witnessed; you have now the hypocrisy to bend the knee before the most degraded of mankind, and to sue and whine and howl for mercy!" Whereat the unfortunate Minor Canon would look, in part indignant and in part perplexed: while his worthy mother sat bridling, with tears in her eyes, and the remainder of the party lapsed into a sort of gelatinous state, in which

there was no flavor or solidity, and very little resistance.

But the gush of philanthropy that burst forth when the departure of Mr. Honeythunder began to impend must have been highly gratifying to the feelings of that distinguished man. His coffee was produced by the special activity of Mr. Tope, a full hour before he wanted it. Mr. Crisparkle sat with his watch in his hand, for about the same period, lest he should overstay his time. The four young people were unanimous in believing that the Cathedral clock struck three quarters, when it actually struck but one. Miss Twinkleton estimated the distance to the omnibus at five-and-twenty minutes' walk, when it was really five. The affectionate kindness of the whole circle hustled him into his great-coat, and shoved him out into the moonlight, as if he were a fugitive traitor with whom they sympathized, and a troop of horse were at the back door. Mr. Crisparkle and his new charge, who took him to the omnibus, were so fervent in their apprehensions of his catching cold, that they shut him up in it instantly and left him, with still half an hour to spare.

CHAPTER VII.

MORE CONFIDENCES THAN ONE.

"I know very little of that gentleman, sir," said Neville to the Minor Canon as they turned back.

"You know very little of your guardian?" the Minor Canon repeated.

"Almost nothing."

"How came he —"

"To be my guardian? I'll tell you, sir. I suppose you know that we come (my sister and I) from Ceylon?"

"Indeed, no."

"I wonder at that. We lived with a step-father there. Our mother died there, when we were little children. We have had a wretched existence. She made him our guardian, and he was a miserly wretch who grudged us food to eat, and clothes to wear. At his death, he passed us over to this man; for no better reason that I know of, than his being a friend or connection of his, whose name was always in print and catching his attention.

"That was lately, I suppose?"

"Quite lately, sir. This step-father of ours was a cruel brute as well as a grinding one. It was well he died when he did, or I might have killed him."

Mr. Crisparkle stopped short in the moonlight and looked at his hopeful pupil in consternation.

"I surprise you, sir?" he said, with a quick change to a submissive manner.

"You shock me; unspeakably shock me."

The pupil hung his head for a little while, as they walked on, and then said, "You never saw him beat your sister. I have seen him beat mine, more than once or twice, and I never forgot it."

"Nothing," said Mr. Crisparkle, "not even a beloved and beautiful sister's tears under dastardly ill-

usage," he became less severe, in spite of himself, as his indignation rose, "could justify those horrible expressions that you used."

"I am sorry I used them, and especially to you, sir. I beg to recall them. But permit me to set you right on one point. You spoke of my sister's tears. My sister would have let him tear her to pieces, before she would have let him believe that he could make her shed a tear."

Mr. Crisparkle reviewed those mental notes of his, and was neither at all surprised to hear it, nor at all disposed to question it.

"Perhaps you will think it strange, sir," — this was said in a hesitating voice, — "that I should so soon ask you to allow me to confide in you, and to have the kindness to hear a word or two from me in my defence?"

"Defence?" Mr. Crisparkle repeated. "You are not on your defence, Mr. Neville."

"I think I am, sir. At least I know I should be, if you were better acquainted with my character."

"Well, Mr. Neville," was the rejoinder. "What if you leave me to find it out?"

"Since it is your pleasure, sir," answered the young man, with a quick change in his manner to sullen disappointment, — "since it is your pleasure to check me in my impulse, I must submit."

There was that in the tone of this short speech which made the conscientious man to whom it was addressed uneasy. It hinted to him that he might, without meaning it, turn aside a trustfulness beneficial to a misshapen young mind and perhaps to his own power of directing and improving it. They were within sight of the lights in his windows, and he stopped.

"Let us turn back and take a turn or two up and down, Mr. Neville, or you may not have time to finish what you wish to say to me. You are hasty in thinking that I mean to check you. Quite the contrary. I invite your confidence."

"You have invited it, sir, without knowing it, ever since I came here. I say 'ever since,' as if I had been here a week! The truth is, we came here (my sister and I) to quarrel with you and affront you, and break away again."

"Really?" said Mr. Crisparkle, at a dead loss for anything else to say.

"You see, we could not know what you were beforehand, sir; could we?"

"Clearly not," said Mr. Crisparkle.

"And having liked no one else with whom we have ever been brought into contact, we had made up our minds not to like you."

"Really?" said Mr. Crisparkle again.

"But we do like you, sir, and we see an unmistakable difference between your house and your reception of us, and anything else we have ever known. This, — and my happening to be alone with you, — and everything around us seeming so quiet and peaceful after Mr. Honeythunder's departure, — and Cloisterham being so old and grave and beautiful, with the moon shining on it, — these things inclined me to open my heart."

"I quite understand, Mr. Neville. And it is salutary to listen to such influences."

"In describing my own imperfections, sir, I must ask you not to suppose that I am describing my sister's. She has come out of the disadvantages of our miserable life as much better than I am as that Cathedral tower is higher than those chimneys."

Mr. Crisparkle in his own breast was not so sure of this.

"I have had, sir, from my earliest remembrance, to suppress a deadly and bitter hatred. This has made me secret and revengeful. I have been always tyrannically held down by the strong hand. This has driven me, in my weakness, to the resource of being false and mean. I have been stinted of education, liberty, money, dress, the very necessities of life, the commonest pleasures of childhood, the commonest possessions of youth. This has caused me to be utterly wanting in I don't know what emotions, or remembrances, or good instincts, — I have not even a name for the thing, you see! — that you have had to work upon in other young men to whom you have been accustomed."

"This is evidently true. But this is not encouraging," thought Mr. Crisparkle as they turned again.

"And to finish with, sir: I have been brought up

among abject and servile dependants, of an inferior race, and I may easily have contracted some affinity with them. Sometimes, I don't know but that it may be a drop of what is tigerish in their blood."

"As in the case of that remark just now," thought Mr. Crisparkle.

"In a last word of reference to my sister, sir (we are twin children), you ought to know, to her honor, that nothing in our misery ever subdued her, though it often cowed me. When we ran away from it (we ran away four times in six years, to be soon brought back and cruelly punished), the flight was always of her planning and leading. Each time she dressed as a boy, and showed the daring of a man. I take it we were seven years old when we first decamped; but I remember, when I lost the pocket-knife with which she was to have cut her hair short, how desperately she tried to tear it out, or bite it off. I have nothing further to say, sir, except that I hope you will bear with me and make allowance for me."

"Of that, Mr. Neville, you may be sure," returned the Minor Canon. "I don't preach more than I can help, and I will not repay your confidence with a sermon. But I entreat you to bear in mind, very seriously and steadily, that if I am to do you any good, it can only be with your own assistance; and that you can only render that, efficiently, by seeking aid from Heaven."

"I will try to do my part, sir?"

"And, Mr. Neville, I will try to do mine. Here is my hand on it. May God bless our endeavors!"

They were now standing at his house door, and a cheerful sound of voices and laughter was heard within.

"We will take one more turn before going in," said Mr. Crisparkle, "for I want to ask you a question. When you said you were in a changed mind concerning me, you spoke, not only for yourself, but for your sister too."

"Undoubtedly I did, sir."

"Excuse me, Mr. Neville, but I think you have had no opportunity of communicating with your sister since I met you. Mr. Honeythunder was very eloquent; but perhaps I may venture to say, without ill-nature, that he

rather monopolized the occasion. May you not have answered for your sister without sufficient warrant?"

Neville shook his head with a proud smile.

"You don't know, sir, yet, what a complete understanding can exist between my sister and me, though no spoken word — perhaps hardly as much as a look — may have passed between us. She not only feels as I have described, but she very well knows that I am taking this opportunity of speaking to you, both for her and for myself."

Mr. Crisparkle looked in his face, with some incredulity; but his face expressed such absolute and firm conviction of the truth of what he said, that Mr. Crisparkle looked at the pavement, and mused, until they came to his door again.

"I will ask for one more turn, sir, this time," said the young man with a rather heightened color rising in his face. "But for Mr. Honeythunder's — I think you called it eloquence, sir?" (somewhat slyly.)

"I — yes, I called it eloquence," said Mr. Crisparkle.

"But for Mr. Honeythunder's eloquence, I might have had no need to ask you what I am going to ask you. This Mr. Edwin Drood, sir: I think that's the name?"

"Quite correct," said Mr. Crisparkle. "D-r-double o-d."

"Does he — or did he — read with you, sir?"

"Never, Mr. Neville. He comes here visiting his relation, Mr. Jasper."

"Is Miss Bud his relation, too, sir?"

("Now, why should he ask that, with sudden superciliousness!" thought Mr. Crisparkle.) Then he explained, aloud, what he knew of the little story of their betrothal.

"Oh! *That's* it, is it?" said the young man. "I understand his air of proprietorship, now!"

This was said so evidently to himself, or to anybody rather than Mr. Crisparkle, that the latter instinctively felt as if to notice it would be almost tantamount to noticing a passage in a letter which he had read by chance over the writer's shoulder. A moment afterwards they re-entered the house.

Mr. Jasper was seated at the piano as they came into his drawing-room, and was accompanying Miss Rosebud while she sang. It was a consequence of his playing the accompaniment without notes, and of her being a heedless little creature very apt to go wrong, that he followed her lips most attentively, with his eyes as well as hands; carefully and softly hinting the key-note from time to time. Standing with an arm drawn round her, but with a face far more intent on Mr. Jasper than on her singing, stood Helena, between whom and her brother an instantaneous recognition passed, in which Mr. Crisparkle saw, or thought he saw, the understanding that had been spoken of flash out. Mr. Neville then took his admiring station, leaning against the piano, opposite the singer; Mr. Crisparkle sat down by the china shepherdess; Edwin Drood gallantly furled and unfurled Miss Twinkleton's fan; and that lady passively claimed that sort of exhibitor's proprietorship in the accomplishment on view, which Mr. Tope, the Verger, daily claimed in the Cathedral service.

The song went on. It was a sorrowful strain of parting, and the fresh young voice was very plaintive and tender. As Jasper watched the pretty lips, and ever and again hinted the one note, as though it were a low whisper from himself, the voice became less steady, until all at once the singer broke into a burst of tears, and shrieked out, with her hands over her eyes, "I can't bear this! I am frightened! Take me away!"

With one swift turn of her lithe figure, Helena laid the little beauty on a sofa, as if she had never caught her up. Then, on one knee beside her, and with one hand upon her rosy mouth, while with the other she appealed to all the rest, Helena said to them, "It's nothing; it's all over; don't speak to her for one minute, and she is well!"

Jasper's hands had, in the same instant, lifted themselves from the keys, and were now poised above them, as though he waited to resume. In that attitude he yet sat quiet: not even looking round, when all the rest had changed their places and were reassuring one another.

"Pussy's not used to an audience; that's the fact," said Edwin Drood. "She got nervous, and could n't

hold out. Besides, Jack, you are such a conscientious master, and require so much, that I believe you make her afraid of you. No wonder."

"No wonder," repeated Helena.

"There, Jack, you hear! You would be afraid of him under similar circumstances, would n't you, Miss Landless?"

"Not under any circumstances," returned Helena.

Jasper brought down his hands, looked over his shoulder, and begged to thank Miss Landless for her vindication of his character. Then he fell to dumbly playing, without striking the notes, while his little pupil was taken to an open window for air, and was otherwise petted and restored. When she was brought back, his place was empty. "Jack's gone, Pussy," Edwin told her. "I am more than half afraid he didn't like to be charged with being the Monster who had frightened you." But she answered never a word, and shivered, as if they had made her a little too cold.

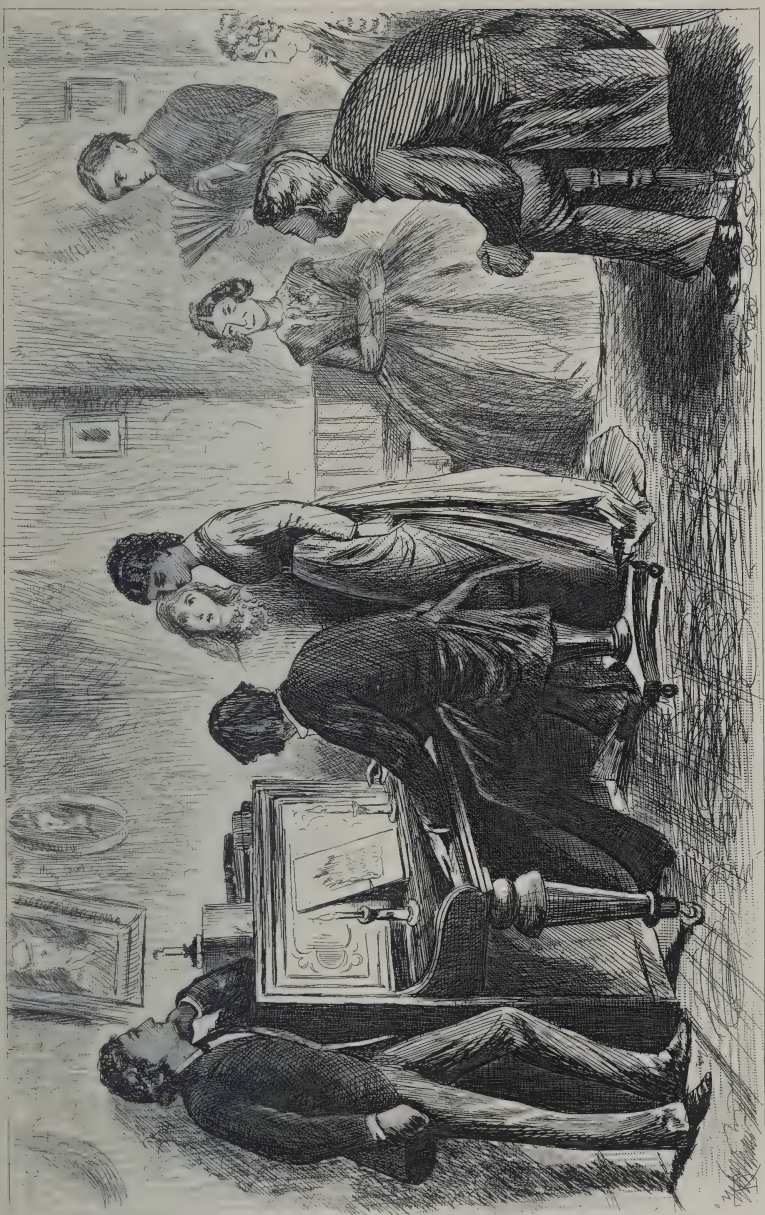
Miss Twinkleton now opining that indeed these were late hours, Mrs. Crisparkle, for finding ourselves outside the walls of the Nuns' House, and that we who undertook the formation of the future wives and mothers of England (the last words in a lower voice, as requiring to be communicated in confidence) were really bound (voice coming up again) to set a better example than one of rakish habits, wrappers were put in requisition, and the two young cavaliers volunteered to see the ladies home. It was soon done, and the gate of the Nuns' House closed upon them.

The boarders had retired, and only Mrs. Tisher in solitary vigil awaited the new pupil. Her bedroom being within Rosa's, very little introduction or explanation was necessary, before she was placed in charge of her new friend, and left for the night.

"This is a blessed relief, my dear," said Helena. "I have been dreading all day, that I should be brought to bay at this time."

"There are not many of us," returned Rosa, "and we are good-natured girls; at least the others are; I can answer for them."

"I can answer for you," laughed Helena, searching



the lovely little face with her dark fiery eyes, and tenderly caressing the small figure. "You will be a friend to me, won't you?"

"I hope so. But the idea of my being a friend to you seems too absurd, though."

"Why?"

"Oh! I am such a mite of a thing, and you are so womanly and handsome. You seem to have resolution and power enough to crush me. I shrink into nothing by the side of your presence even."

"I am a neglected creature, my dear, unacquainted with all accomplishments, sensitively conscious that I have everything to learn, and deeply ashamed to own my ignorance."

"And yet you acknowledge everything to me!" said Rosa.

"My pretty one, can I help it? There is a fascination in you."

"Oh! Is there, though?" pouted Rosa, half in jest and half in earnest. "What a pity Master Eddy does n't feel it more!"

Of course her relations towards that young gentleman had been already imparted, in Minor Canon Corner.

"Why, surely he must love you with all his heart!" cried Helena, with an earnestness that threatened to blaze into ferocity if he did n't.

"Eh? O, well, I suppose he does," said Rosa, pouting again; "I am sure I have no right to say he doesn't. Perhaps it's my fault. Perhaps I am not as nice to him as I ought to be. I don't think I am. But it is so ridiculous!"

Helena's eyes demanded what was.

"We are," said Rosa, answering as if she had spoken.

"We are such a ridiculous couple. And we are always quarrelling."

"Why?"

"Because we both know we are ridiculous, my dear!" Rosa gave that answer as if it were the most conclusive answer in the world.

Helena's masterful look was intent upon her face for a few moments, and then she impulsively put out both her hands and said, —

"You will be my friend and help me?"

"Indeed, my dear, I will," replied Rosa, in a tone of affectionate childishness that went straight and true to her heart; "I will be as good a friend as such a mite of a thing can be to such a noble creature as you. And be a friend to me, please; for I don't understand myself; and I want a friend who can understand me, very much indeed."

Helena Landless kissed her, and, retaining both her hands, said, —

"Who is Mr. Jasper?"

Rosa turned aside her head in answering, "Eddy's uncle, and my music-master."

"You do not love him?"

"Ugh!" She put her hands up to her face, and shook with fear or horror.

"You know that he loves you?"

"O, don't, don't, don't!" cried Rosa, dropping on her knees, and clinging to her new resource. "Don't tell me of it! He terrifies me. He haunts my thoughts, like a dreadful ghost. I feel that I am never safe from him. I feel as if he could pass in through the wall when he is spoken of." She actually did look round, as if she dreaded to see him standing in the shadow behind her.

"Try to tell me more about it, darling."

"Yes, I will, I will. Because you are so strong. But hold me the while, and stay with me afterwards."

"My child! You speak as if he had threatened you in some dark way."

"He has never spoken to me about — that. Never."

"What has he done?"

"He has made a slave of me with his looks. He has forced me to understand him, without his saying a word; and he has forced me to keep silence, without his uttering a threat. When I play, he never moves his eyes from my hands. When I sing, he never moves his eyes from my lips. When he corrects me, and strikes a note, or a chord, or plays a passage, he himself is in the sounds, whispering that he pursues me as a lover, and commanding me to keep his secret. I avoid his eyes, but he forces me to see them without looking at them. Even when a glaze comes over them (which is sometimes the

case), and he seems to wander away into a frightful sort of dream, in which he threatens most, he obliges me to know it, and to know that he is sitting close at my side, more terrible to me then than ever."

"What is this imagined threatening, pretty one? What is threatened?"

"I don't know. I have never even dared to think or wonder what it is."

"And was this all, to-night?"

"This was all; except that to-night when he watched my lips so closely as I was singing, besides feeling terrified, I felt ashamed and passionately hurt. It was as if he kissed me, and I could n't bear it, but cried out. You must never breathe this to any one. Eddy is devoted to him. But you said to-night that you would not be afraid of him, under any circumstances, and that gives me — who am so much afraid of him — courage to tell only you. Hold me! Stay with me! I am too frightened to be left by myself."

The lustrous gypsy-face drooped over the clinging arms and bosom, and the wild black hair fell down protectingly over the childish form. There was a slumbering gleam of fire in the intense dark eyes, though they were then softened with compassion and admiration. Let whomsoever it most concerned look well to it.

CHAPTER VIII.

DAGGERS DRAWN.

THE two young men, having seen the damsels, their charges, enter the court-yard of the Nuns' House, and finding themselves coldly stared at by the brazen door-plate, as if the battered old beau with the glass in his eye were insolent, look at one another, look along the perspective of the moonlit street, and slowly walk away together.

"Do you stay here long, Mr. Drood?" says Neville.

"Not this time," is the careless answer. "I leave for London again to-morrow. But I shall be here, off and on, until next Midsummer; then I shall take my leave of Cloisterham, and England too; for many a long day, I expect."

"Are you going abroad?"

"Going to wake up Egypt a little," is the condescending answer.

"Are you reading?"

"Reading!" repeats Edwin Drood, with a touch of contempt. "No. Doing, working, engineering. My small patrimony was left a part of the capital of the Firm I am with, by my father, a former partner; and I am in charge upon the Firm until I come of age; and then I step into my modest share in the concern. Jack — you met him at dinner — is, until then, my guardian and trustee."

"I heard from Mr. Crisparkle of your other good fortune."

"What do you mean by my other good fortune?"

Neville has made his remark in a watchfully advancing, and yet furtive and shy manner, very expressive of that peculiar air already noticed, of being at once hunter and hunted. Edwin has made his retort with an abruptness

not at all polite. They stop and interchange a rather heated look.

"I hope," says Neville, "there is no offence, Mr. Drood, in my innocently referring to your betrothal?"

"By George!" cries Edwin, leading on again at a somewhat quicker pace. "Everybody in this chattering old Cloisterham refers to it. I wonder no public-house has been set up, with my portrait for the sign of the Betrothed's Head. Or Pussy's portrait. One or the other."

"I am not accountable for Mr. Crisparkle's mentioning the matter to me, quite openly," Neville begins.

"No; that's true; you are not," Edwin Drood assents.

"But," resumes Neville, "I am accountable for mentioning it to you. And I did so, on the supposition that you could not fail to be highly proud of it."

Now, there are these two curious touches of human nature working the secret springs of this dialogue. Neville Landless is already enough impressed by little Rosebud to feel indignant that Edwin Drood (far below her) should hold his prize so lightly. Edwin Drood is already enough impressed by Helena, to feel indignant that Helena's brother (far below her) should dispose of him so coolly, and put him out of the way so entirely.

However, the last remark had better be answered. So, says Edwin, —

"I don't know, Mr. Neville" (adopting that mode of address from Mr. Crisparkle), "that what people are proudest of they usually talk most about; I don't know either, that what they are proudest of they most like other people to talk about. But I live a busy life, and I speak under correction by you readers, who ought to know everything, and I dare say do."

By this time they have both become savage; Mr. Neville out in the open; Edwin Drood under the transparent cover of a popular tune, and a stop now and then to pretend to admire picturesque effects in the moonlight before him.

"It does not seem to me very civil in you," remarks Neville, at length, "to reflect upon a stranger who comes here, not having had your advantages, to try to make up

for lost time. But, to be sure, *I* was not brought up in 'busy life,' and my ideas of civility were formed among Heathens."

"Perhaps the best civility, whatever kind of people we are brought up among," retorts Edwin Drood, "is to mind our own business. If you will set me that example, I promise to follow it."

"Do you know that you take a great deal too much upon yourself," is the angry rejoinder; "and that in the part of the world I come from, you would be called to account for it?"

"By whom, for instance?" asks Edwin Drood, coming to a halt, and surveying the other with a look of disdain.

But here a startling right hand is laid on Edwin's shoulder, and Jasper stands between them. For it would seem that he, too, had strolled round by the Nuns' House, and has come up behind them on the shadowy side of the road.

"Ned, Ned, Ned!" he says. "We must have no more of this. I don't like this. I have overheard high words between you two. Remember, my dear boy, you are almost in the position of host to-night. You belong, as it were, to the place, and in a manner represent it towards a stranger. Mr. Neville is a stranger, and you should respect the obligations of hospitality. And, Mr. Neville," laying his left hand on the inner shoulder of that young gentleman, and thus walking on between them, hand to shoulder on either side, "you will pardon me; but I appeal to you to govern your temper too. Now, what is amiss? But why ask! Let there be nothing amiss, and the question is superfluous. We are all three on a good understanding, are we not?"

After a silent struggle between the two young men who shall speak last, Edwin Drood strikes in with, "So far as I am concerned, Jack, there is no anger in me."

"Nor in me," says Neville Landless, though not so freely, or perhaps so carelessly. "But if Mr. Drood knew all that lies behind me, far away from here, he might know better how it is that sharp-edged words have sharp edges to wound me."

"Perhaps," says Jasper, in a smoothing manner, "we

had better not qualify our good understanding. We had better not say anything having the appearance of a remonstrance or condition ; it might not seem generous. Frankly and freely, you see there is no anger in Ned. Frankly and freely, there is no anger in you, Mr. Neville ? ”

“ None at all, Mr. Jasper.” Still, not quite so frankly or so freely ; or, be it said once again, not quite so carelessly perhaps.

“ All over then ! Now, my bachelor gate-house is a few yards from here, and the heater is on the fire and the wine and glasses are on the table, and it is not a stone’s throw from Minor Canon Corner. Ned, you are up and away to-morrow. We will carry Mr. Neville in with us, to take a stirrup-cup.”

“ With all my heart, Jack.”

“ And with all mine, Mr. Jasper.” Neville feels it impossible to say less, but would rather not go. He has an impression upon him that he has lost hold of his temper ; feels that Edwin Drood’s coolness, so far from being infectious, makes him red-hot.

Mr. Jasper, still walking in the centre, hand to shoulder on either side, beautifully turns the Refrain of a drinking-song, and they all go up to his rooms. There, the first object visible, when he adds the light of a lamp to that of the fire, is the portrait over the chimney-piece. It is not an object calculated to improve the understanding between the two young men, as rather awkwardly reviving the subject of their difference. Accordingly, they both glance at it consciously, but say nothing. Jasper, however (who would appear from his conduct to have gained but an imperfect clew to the cause of their late high words), directly calls attention to it.

“ You recognize that picture, Mr. Neville ? ” shading the lamp to throw the light upon it.

“ I recognize it, but it is far from flattering the original.”

“ O, you are hard upon it ! It was done by Ned, who made me a present of it.”

“ I am sorry for that, Mr. Drood.” Neville apologizes, with a real intention to apologize. “ if I had known I was in the artist’s presence — ”

"O, a joke, sir, a mere joke," Edwin cuts in, with a provoking yawn. "A little humoring of Pussy's points! I'm going to paint her gravely, one of these days, if she's good."

The air of leisurely patronage and indifference with which this is said, as the speaker throws himself back in a chair and clasps his hands at the back of his head, as a rest for it, is very exasperating to the excitable and excited Neville. Jasper looks observantly from the one to the other, slightly smiles, and turns his back to mix a jug of mulled wine at the fire. It seems to require much mixing and compounding.

"I suppose, Mr. Neville," says Edwin, quick to resent the indignant protest against himself in the face of young Landless, which is fully as visible as the portrait, or the fire, or the lamp, — "I suppose that if you painted the picture of your lady-love —"

"I can't paint," is the hasty interruption.

"That's your misfortune, and not your fault. You would if you could. But if you could, I suppose you would make her (no matter what she was in reality) Juno, Minerva, Diana, and Venus, all in one. Eh?"

"I have no lady-love, and I can't say."

"If I were to try my hand," says Edwin, with a boyish boastfulness getting up in him, "on a portrait of Miss Landless, — in earnest, mind you; in earnest, — you should see what I could do!"

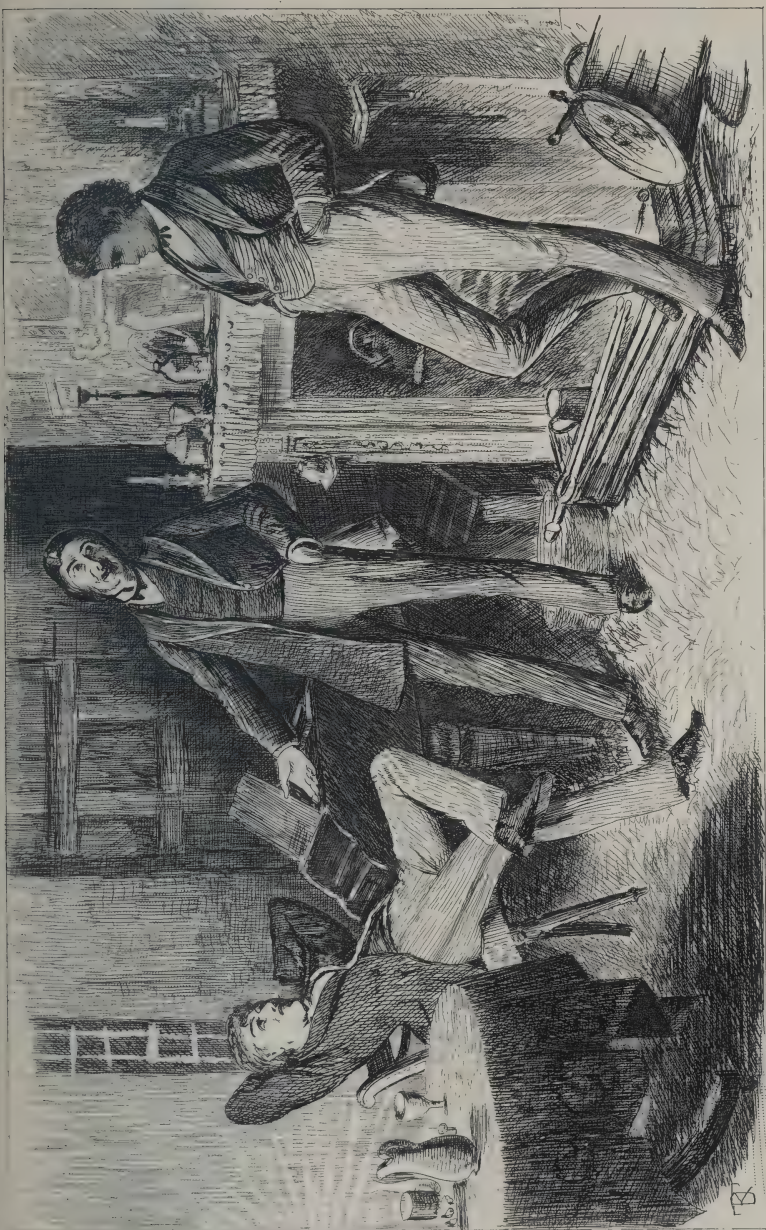
"My sister's consent to sit for it being first got, I suppose? As it never will be got, I am afraid I shall never see what you can do. I must bear the loss."

Jasper turns round from the fire, fills a large goblet glass for Neville, fills a large goblet glass for Edwin, and hands each his own; then fills for himself, saying, —

"Come, Mr. Neville, we are to drink to my Nephew, Ned. As it is his foot that is in the stirrup — metaphorically — our stirrup-cup is to be devoted to him. Ned, my dearest fellow, my love!"

Jasper sets the example of nearly emptying his glass, and Neville follows it. Edwin Drood says, "Thank you both very much," and follows the double example.

"Look at him!" cries Jasper, stretching out his hand admiringly and tenderly, though rallying too. "See



where he lounges so easily, Mr. Neville! The world is all before him where to choose. A life of stirring work and interest, a life of change and excitement, a life of domestic ease and love! Look at him!"

Edwin Drood's face has become quickly and remarkably flushed by the wine; so has the face of Neville Landless. Edwin still sits thrown back in his chair, making that rest of clasped hands for his head.

"See how little he heeds it all!" Jasper proceeds in a bantering vein. "It is hardly worth his while to pluck the golden fruit that hangs ripe on the tree for him. And yet consider the contrast, Mr. Neville. You and I have no prospect of stirring work and interest, or of change and excitement, or of domestic ease and love. You and I have no prospect (unless you are more fortunate than I am, which may easily be) but the tedious, unchanging round of this dull place."

"Upon my soul, Jack," says Edwin, complacently, "I feel quite apologetic for having my way smoothed as you describe. But you know what I know, Jack, and it may not be so very easy as it seems, after all. May it, Pussy?" To the portrait, with a snap of his thumb and finger. "We have got to hit it off yet; have n't we, Pussy? You know what I mean, Jack."

His speech has become thick and indistinct. Jasper, quiet and self-possessed, looks to Neville, as expecting his answer or comment. When Neville speaks, *his* speech is also thick and indistinct.

"It might have been better for Mr. Drood to have known some hardships," he says, defiantly.

"Pray," retorts Edwin, turning merely his eyes in that direction, — "pray why might it have been better for Mr. Drood to have known some hardships?"

"Ay," Jasper assents with an air of interest; "let us know why?"

"Because they might have made him more sensible," says Neville, "of good fortune that is not by any means necessarily the result of his own merits."

Mr. Jasper quickly looks to his nephew for his rejoinder.

"Have *you* known hardships, may I ask?" says Edwin Drood, sitting upright.

Mr. Jasper quickly looks to the other for his retort
“I have.”

“And what have they made *you* sensible of?”

Mr. Jasper’s play of eyes between the two holds good throughout the dialogue, to the end.

“I have told you once before to-night.”

“You have done nothing of the sort.”

“I tell you I have. That you take a great deal too much upon yourself.”

“You added something else to that, if I remember?”

“Yes, I did say something else.”

“Say it again.”

“I said that in the part of the world I came from you would be called to account for it.”

“Only there?” cries Edwin Drood, with a contemptuous laugh. “A long way off, I believe? Yes; I see! That part of the world is at a safe distance.”

“Say here, then,” rejoins the other, rising in a fury. “Say anywhere! Your vanity is intolerable, your conceit is beyond endurance, you talk as if you were some rare and precious prize, instead of a common boaster. You are a common fellow, and a common boaster.”

“Pooh, pooh,” says Edwin Drood, equally furious, but more collected; “how should you know? You may know a black common fellow, or a black common boaster, when you see him (and no doubt you have a large acquaintance that way); but you are no judge of white men.”

This insulting allusion to his dark skin infuriates Neville to that violent degree that he flings the dregs of his wine at Edwin Drood, and is in the act of flinging the goblet after it, when his arm is caught in the nick of time by Jasper.

“Ned, my dear fellow!” he cries in a loud voice; “I entreat you, I command you, to be still!” There has been a rush of all the three, and a clattering of glasses and overturning of chairs. “Mr. Neville, for shame! Give this glass to me. Open your hand, sir. I WILL have it!”

But Neville throws him off, and pauses for an instant, in a raging passion, with the goblet yet in his uplifted hand. Then, he dashes it down under the grate, with

such force that the broken splinters fly out again in a shower ; and he leaves the house.

When he first emerges into the night air, nothing around him is still or steady ; nothing around him shows like what it is ; he only knows that he stands with a bare head in the midst of a blood-red whirl, waiting to be struggled with, and to struggle to the death.

But, nothing happening, and the moon looking down upon him as if he were dead after a fit of wrath, he holds his steam-hammer beating head and heart, and staggers away. Then he becomes half conscious of having heard himself bolted and barred out, like a dangerous animal ; and thinks what shall he do ?

Some wildly passionate ideas of the river dissolve under the spell of the moonlight on the Cathedral and the graves, and the remembrance of his sister, and the thought of what he owes to the good man who has but that very day won his confidence and given him his pledge. He repairs to Minor Canon Corner, and knocks softly at the door.

It is Mr. Crisparkle's custom to sit up last of the early household, very softly touching his piano and practising his favorite parts in concerted vocal music. The south wind that goes where it lists, by way of Minor Canon Corner on a still night, is not more subdued than Mr. Crisparkle at such times, regardful of the slumbers of the China shepherdess.

His knock is immediately answered by Mr. Crisparkle himself. When he opens the door, candle in hand, his cheerful face falls, and disappointed amazement is in it.

" Mr. Neville ! In this disorder ! Where have you been ? "

" I have been to Mr. Jasper's, sir. With his nephew. "

" Come in. "

The Minor Canon props him by the elbow with a strong hand (in a strictly scientific manner, worthy of his morning trainings), and turns him into his own little book-room, and shuts the door.

" I have begun ill, sir. I have begun dreadfully ill. "

" Too true. You are not sober, Mr. Neville. "

" I am afraid I am not, sir, though I can satisfy you at another time that I have had very little indeed to

drink, and that it overcame me in the strangest and most sudden manner."

"Mr. Neville, Mr. Neville," says the Minor Canon, shaking his head with a sorrowful smile, "I have heard that said before."

"I think — my mind is much confused, but I think — it is equally true of Mr. Jasper's nephew, sir."

"Very likely," is the dry rejoinder.

"We quarrelled, sir. He insulted me most grossly. He had heated that tigerish blood I told you of to-day, before then."

"Mr. Neville," rejoins the Minor Canon, mildly, but firmly, "I request you not to speak to me with that clenched right hand. Unclench it, if you please."

"He goaded me, sir," pursues the young man, instantly obeying, "beyond my power of endurance. I cannot say whether or no he meant it at first, but he did it. He certainly meant it at last. In short, sir," with an irrepressible outburst, "in the passion into which he lashed me, I would have cut him down if I could, and I tried to do it."

"You have clenched that hand again," is Mr. Crisparkle's quiet commentary.

"I beg your pardon, sir."

"You know your room, for I showed it to you before dinner; but I will accompany you to it once more. Your arm, if you please. Softly, for the house is all abed."

Scooping his hand into the same scientific elbow-rest as before, and backing it up with the inert strength of his arm, as skilfully as a Police Expert, and with an apparent repose quite unattainable by novices, Mr. Crisparkle conducts his pupil to the pleasant and orderly old room prepared for him. Arrived there, the young man throws himself into a chair, and, flinging his arms upon his reading-table, rests his head upon them with an air of wretched self-reproach.

The gentle Minor Canon has had it in his thoughts to leave the room, without a word. But, looking round at the door, and seeing this dejected figure, he turns back to it, touches it with a mild hand, and says, "Good night!" A sob is his only acknowledgment. He might have had many a worse; perhaps could have had few better.

Another soft knock at the outer door attracts his attention as he goes down stairs. He opens it to Mr. Jasper, holding in his hand the pupil's hat.

"We have had an awful scene with him," says Jasper, in a low voice.

"Has it been so bad as that?"

"Murderous!"

Mr. Crisparkle remonstrates, "No, no, no. Do not use such strong words."

"He might have laid my dear boy dead at my feet. It is no fault of his that he did not. But that I was, through the mercy of God, swift and strong with him, he would have cut him down on my hearth."

The phrase smites home.

"Ah!" thinks Mr. Crisparkle. "His own words!"

"Seeing what I have seen to-night, and hearing what I have heard," adds Jasper, with great earnestness, "I shall never know peace of mind when there is danger of those two coming together with no one else to interfere. It was horrible. There is something of the tiger in his dark blood."

"Ah!" thinks Mr. Crisparkle. "So he said."

"You, my dear sir," pursues Jasper, taking his hand, "even you have accepted a dangerous charge."

"You need have no fear for me, Jasper," returns Mr. Crisparkle, with a quiet smile. "I have none for myself."

"I have none for myself," returns Jasper, with an emphasis on the last pronoun, "because I am not, nor am I in the way of being, the object of his hostility. But you may be, and my dear boy has been. Good night!"

Mr. Crisparkle goes in, with the hat that has so easily, so almost imperceptibly, acquired the right to be hung up in his hall, hangs it up, and goes thoughtfully to bed.

CHAPTER IX.

BIRDS IN THE BUSH.

ROSA, having no relation that she knew of in the world, had, from the seventh year of her age, known no home but the Nuns' House, and no mother but Miss Twinkleton. Her remembrance of her own mother was of a pretty little creature like herself (not much older than herself, it seemed to her), who had been brought home in her father's arms, drowned. The fatal accident had happened at a party of pleasure. Every fold and color in the pretty summer dress, and even the long wet hair, with scattered petals of ruined flowers still clinging to it, as the dead young figure, in its sad, sad beauty lay upon the bed, were fixed indelibly in Rosa's recollection. So were the wild despair and the subsequent bowed-down grief of her poor young father, who died broken-hearted on the first anniversary of that hard day.

The betrothal of Rosa grew out of the soothing of his year of mental distress by his fast friend and old college companion, Drood : who likewise had been left a widower in his youth. But he, too, went the silent road into which all earthly pilgrimages merge, some sooner and some later ; and thus the young couple had come to be as they were.

The atmosphere of pity surrounding the little orphan girl when she first came to Cloisterham had never cleared away. It had taken brighter hues as she grew older, happier, prettier ; now it had been golden, now roseate, and now azure ; but it had always adorned her with some soft light of its own. The general desire to console and caress her had caused her to be treated in the beginning as a child much younger than her years ; the same desire had caused her to be still petted when she was a child no longer. Who should be her favorite ? who should anticipate this or that small present, or do

her this or that small service? who should take her home for the holidays? who should write to her the oftenest when they were separated? and whom she would most rejoice to see again when they were reunited;—even these gentle rivalries were not without their slight dashes of bitterness in the Nuns' House. Well for the poor nuns in their day, if they hid no harder strife under their veils and rosaries.

Thus Rosa had grown to be an amiable, giddy, wilful, winning little creature; spoilt, in the sense of counting upon kindness from all around her; but not in the sense of repaying it with indifference. Possessing an exhaustless well of affection in her nature, its sparkling waters had freshened and brightened the Nuns' House for years, and yet its depths had never yet been moved: what might betide when that came to pass; what developing changes might fall upon the heedless head and light heart then, remained to be seen.

By what means the news that there had been a quarrel between the two young men over-night, involving even some kind of onslaught by Mr. Neville upon Edwin Drood, got into Miss Twinkleton's establishment before breakfast, it is impossible to say. Whether it was brought in by the birds of the air, or came blowing in with the very air itself, when the casement windows were set open; whether the baker brought it kneaded into the bread, or the milkman delivered it as part of the adulteration of his milk; or the housemaids, beating the dust out of their mats against the gateposts, received it in exchange deposited on the mats by the town atmosphere; certain it is that the news permeated every gable of the old building before Miss Twinkleton was down, and that Miss Twinkleton herself received it through Mrs. Tisher, while yet in the act of dressing; or (as she might have expressed the phrase to a parent or guardian of a mythological turn) of sacrificing to the Graces.

Miss Landless's brother had thrown a bottle at Mr. Edwin Drood.

Miss Landless's brother had thrown a knife at Mr. Edwin Drood.

A knife became suggestive of a fork, and Miss Landless's brother had thrown a fork at Mr. Edwin Drood.

As in the governing precedent of Peter Piper, alleged to have picked the peck of pickled pepper, it was held physically desirable to have evidence of the existence of the peck of pickled pepper which Peter Piper was alleged to have picked ; so, in this case, it was held psychologically important to know, Why Miss Landless's brother threw a bottle, knife, or fork — or bottle, knife, *and* fork — for the cook had been given to understand it was all three — at Mr. Edwin Drood ?

Well, then. Miss Landless's brother had said he admired Miss Bud. Mr. Edwin Drood had said to Miss Landless's brother that he had no business to admire Miss Bud. Miss Landless's brother had then "up'd" (this was the cook's exact information) with the bottle, knife, fork, and decanter (the decanter now coolly flying at everybody's head, without the least introduction), and thrown them all at Mr. Edwin Drood.

Poor little Rosa put a forefinger into each of her ears when these rumors began to circulate, and retired into a corner, beseeching not to be told any more ; but Miss Landless, begging permission of Miss Twinkleton to go and speak with her brother, and pretty plainly showing that she would take it if it were not given, struck out the more definite course of going to Mr. Crisparkle's for accurate intelligence.

When she came back (being first closeted with Miss Twinkleton, in order that anything objectionable in her tidings might be retained by that discreet filter), she imparted to Rosa only what had taken place ; dwelling with a flushed cheek on the provocation her brother had received, but almost limiting it to that last gross affront as crowning "some other words between them," and, out of consideration for her new friend, passing lightly over the fact that the other words had originated in her lover's taking things in general so very easily. To Rosa direct, she brought a petition from her brother that she would forgive him ; and, having delivered it with sisterly earnestness, made an end of the subject.

It was reserved for Miss Twinkleton to tone down the public mind of the Nuns' House. That lady, therefore, entering in a stately manner what plebeians might have called the school-room, but what, in the patrician lan-

guage of the head of the Nuns' House, was euphuistically, not to say roundaboutedly, denominated "the apartment alletted to study," and saying with a forensic air, "Ladies!" all rose. Mrs. Tisher at the same time grouped herself behind her chief, as representing Queen Elizabeth's first historical female friend at Tilbury Fort. Miss Twinkleton then proceeded to remark that Rumor, Ladies, had been represented by the Bard of Avon, — needless were it to mention the immortal SHAKESPEARE, also called the Swan of his native river, not improbably with some reference to the ancient superstition that that bird of graceful plumage (Miss Jennings will please stand upright) sang sweetly on the approach of death, for which we have no ornithological authority, — Rumor, Ladies, had been represented by that bard — hem! —

"who drew
The celebrated Jew,"

as painted full of tongues. Rumor in Cloisterham (Miss Ferdinand will honor me with her attention) was no exception to the great limner's portrait of Rumor elsewhere. A slight *fracas* between two young gentlemen occurring last night within a hundred miles of these peaceful walls (Miss Ferdinand, being apparently incorrigible, will have the kindness to write out this evening, in the original language, the first four fables of our vivacious neighbor, Monsieur La Fontaine) had been very grossly exaggerated by Rumor's voice. In the first alarm and anxiety arising from our sympathy with a sweet young friend, not wholly to be dissociated from one of the gladiators in the bloodless arena in question (the impropriety of Miss Reynolds's appearing to stab herself in the band with a pin is far too obvious, and too glaringly unladylike, to be pointed out), we descended from our maiden elevation to discuss this uncongenial and this unfit theme. Responsible inquiries having assured us that it was but one of those "airy nothings" pointed at by the Poet (whose name and date of birth Miss Giggles will supply within half an hour), we would now discard the subject, and concentrate our minds upon the grateful labors of the day.

But the subject so survived all day, nevertheless, that

Miss Ferdinand got into new trouble by surreptitiously clapping on a paper mustache at dinner-time, and going through the motions of aiming a water-bottle at Miss Giggles, who drew a table-spoon in defence.

Now, Rosa thought of this unlucky quarrel a great deal, and thought of it with an uncomfortable feeling that she was involved in it, as cause, or consequence, or what not, through being in a false position altogether as to her marriage engagement. Never free from such uneasiness when she was with her affianced husband, it was not likely that she would be free from it when they were apart. To-day, too, she was cast in upon herself, and deprived of the relief of talking freely with her new friend, because the quarrel had been with Helena's brother, and Helena undisguisedly avoided the subject as a delicate and difficult one to herself. At this critical time, of all times, Rosa's guardian was announced as having come to see her.

Mr. Grewgious had been well selected for his trust, as a man of incorruptible integrity, but certainly for no other appropriate quality discernible on the surface. He was an arid, sandy man, who, if he had been put into a grinding-mill, looked as if he would have ground immediately into high-dried snuff. He had a scanty flat crop of hair, in color and consistency like some very mangy yellow fur tippet; it was so unlike hair, that it must have been a wig, but for the stupendous improbability of anybody's voluntarily sporting such a head. The little play of feature that his face presented was cut deep into it, in a few hard curves that made it more like work; and he had certain notches in his forehead, which looked as though Nature had been about to touch them into sensibility or refinement, when she had impatiently thrown away the chisel, and said, "I really cannot be worried to finish off this man; let him go as he is."

With too great length of throat at his upper end, and too much ankle-bone and heel at his lower; with an awkward and hesitating manner; with a shambling walk, and with what is called a near sight, — which perhaps prevented his observing how much white cotton stocking he displayed to the public eye, in contrast with his black suit, — Mr. Grewgious still had some strange

capacity in him of making on the whole an agreeable impression.

Mr. Grewgious was discovered by his ward, much discomfited by being in Miss Twinkleton's company in Miss Twinkleton's own sacred room. Dim forebodings of being examined in something, and not coming well out of it, seemed to oppress the poor gentleman when found in these circumstances.

"My dear, how do you do? I am glad to see you. My dear, how much improved you are. Permit me to hand you a chair, my dear."

Miss Twinkleton rose at her little writing-table, saying, with general sweetness, as to the polite Universe, "Will you permit me to retire?"

"By no means, madam, on my account. I beg that you will not move."

"I must entreat permission to *move*," returned Miss Twinkleton, repeating the word with a charming grace; "but I will not withdraw, since you are so obliging. If I wheel my desk to this corner window, shall I be in the way?"

"Madam! In the way!"

"You are very kind. Rosa, my dear, you will be under no restraint, I am sure."

Here Mr. Grewgious, left by the fire with Rosa, said again, "My dear, how do you do? I am glad to see you, my dear." And having waited for her to sit down, sat down himself.

"My visits," said Mr. Grewgious, are, like those of the angels — not that I compare myself to an angel."

"No sir," said Rosa.

"Not by any means," assented Mr. Grewgious. "I merely refer to my visits, which are few and far between. The angels are, we know very well, up stairs."

Miss Twinkleton looked round with a kind of stiff stare.

"I refer, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious, laying his hand on Rosa's, as the possibility thrilled through his frame of his otherwise seeming to take the awful liberty of calling Miss Twinkleton my dear, — "I refer to the other young ladies."

Miss Twinkleton resumed her writing.

Mr. Grewgious, with a sense of not having managed

his opening point quite as neatly as he might have desired, smoothed his head from back to front as if he had just dived, and were pressing the water out, — this smoothing action, however superfluous, was habitual with him, — and took a pocket-book from his coat-pocket, and a stump of black-lead pencil from his waistcoat-pocket.

“I made,” he said, turning the leaves, — “I made a guiding memorandum or so, — as I usually do, for I have no conversational powers whatever, — to which I will, with your permission, my dear, refer. ‘Well and happy.’ Truly. You are well and happy, my dear? You look so.”

“Yes, indeed, sir,” answered Rosa.

“For which,” said Mr. Grewgious, with a bend of his head towards the corner window, “our warmest acknowledgments are due, and I am sure are rendered, to the maternal kindness and the constant care and consideration of the lady whom I have now the honor to see before me.”

This point, again, made but a lame departure from Mr. Grewgious, and never got to its destination; for, Miss Twinkleton, feeling that the courtesies required her to be by this time quite outside the conversation, was biting the end of her pen, and looking upward, as waiting for the descent of an idea from any member of the Celestial Nine who might have one to spare.

Mr. Grewgious smoothed his smooth head again, and then made another reference to his pocket-book; lining out “well and happy” as disposed of.

“‘Pounds, shillings, and pence’ is my next note. A dry subject for a young lady, but an important subject too. Life is pounds, shillings, and pence. Death is —” A sudden recollection of the death of her two parents seemed to stop him, and he said in a softer tone, and evidently inserting the negative as an after-thought, “Death is *not* pounds, shillings, and pence.”

His voice was as hard and dry as himself, and Fancy might have ground it straight, like himself, into high-dried snuff. And yet, through the very limited means of expression that he possessed, he seemed to express kindness. If Nature had but finished him off, kindness might

have been recognizable in his face at this moment. But if the notches in his forehead would n't fuse together, and if his face would work and could n't play, what could he do, poor man!

" 'Pounds, shillings, and pence.' You find your allowance always sufficient for your wants, my dear?"

Rosa wanted for nothing, and therefore it was ample.

"And you are not in debt?"

Rosa laughed at the idea of being in debt. It seemed, to her inexperience, a comical vagary of the imagination. Mr. Grewgious stretched his near sight to be sure that this was her view of the case. "Ah!" he said, as comment, with a furtive glance towards Miss Twinkleton, and lining out "pounds, shillings, and pence," "I spoke of having got among the angels! So I did!"

Rosa felt what his next memorandum would prove to be, and was blushing and folding a crease in her dress with one embarrassed hand long before he found it.

" 'Marriage.' Hem!" Mr. Grewgious carried his smoothing hand down over his eyes and nose, and even chin, before drawing his chair a little nearer, and speaking a little more confidentially: "I now touch, my dear, upon the point that is the direct cause of my troubling you with the present visit. Otherwise, being a particularly Angular man, I should not have intruded here. I am the last man to intrude into a sphere for which I am so entirely unfitted. I feel, on these premises, as if I was a bear—with the cramp—in a youthful Cotillon."

His ungainliness gave him enough of the air of his simile to set Rosa off laughing heartily.

"It strikes you in the same light," said Mr. Grewgious, with perfect calmness. "Just so. To return to my memorandum. Mr. Edwin has been to and fro here, as was arranged. You have mentioned that, in your quarterly letters to me. And you like him, and he likes you."

"I like him very much, sir," rejoined Rosa.

"So I said, my dear," returned her guardian, for whose ear the timid emphasis was much too fine. "Good. And you correspond."

"We write to one another," said Rosa, pouting, as she recalled their epistolary differences.

"Such is the meaning that I attach to the word 'correspond' in this application, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious. "Good. All goes well, time works on, and at this next Christmas-time it will become necessary, as a matter of form, to give the exemplary lady in the corner window, to whom we are so much indebted, business notice of your departure in the ensuing half-year. Your relations with her are far more than business relations, no doubt; but a residue of business remains in them, and business is business ever. I am a particularly Angular man," proceeded Mr. Grewgious, as if it suddenly occurred to him to mention it, "and I am not used to give anything away. If, for these two reasons, some competent Proxy would give *you* away, I should take it very kindly."

Rosa intimated, with her eyes on the ground, that she thought a substitute might be found, if required.

"Surely, surely," said Mr. Grewgious. "For instance, the gentleman who teaches Dancing here, — he would know how to do it with graceful propriety. He would advance and retire in a manner satisfactory to the feelings of the officiating clergyman, and of yourself, and the bridegroom, and all parties concerned. I am — I am a particularly Angular man," said Mr. Grewgious, as if he had made up his mind to screw it out at last, "and should only blunder."

Rosa sat still and silent. Perhaps her mind had not got quite so far as the ceremony yet, but was lagging on the way there.

"Memorandum, 'Will.' Now, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious, referring to his notes, disposing of "marriage" with his pencil, and taking a paper from his pocket, "although I have before possessed you with the contents of your father's will, I think it right at this time to leave a certified copy of it in your hands. And although Mr. Edwin is also aware of its contents, I think it right at this time likewise to place a certified copy of it in Mr. Jasper's hands —"

"Not in his own?" asked Rosa, looking up quickly. "Cannot the copy go to Eddy himself?"

"Why, yes, my dear, if you particularly wish it — but I spoke of Mr. Jasper as being his trustee."

"I do particularly wish it, if you please," said Rosa, hurriedly and earnestly; "I don't like Mr. Jasper to come between us, in any way."

"It is natural, I suppose," said Mr. Grewgious, "that your young husband should be all in all. Yes. You observe that I say, I suppose. The fact is, I am a particularly Unnatural man, and I don't know from my own knowledge."

Rosa looked at him with some wonder.

"I mean," he explained, "that young ways were never my ways. I was the only offspring of parents far advanced in life, and I half believe I was born advanced in life myself. No personality is intended towards the name you will so soon change, when I remark that while the general growth of people seem to have come into existence buds, I seem to have come into existence a chip. I was a chip — and a very dry one — when I first became aware of myself. Respecting the other certified copy, your wish shall be complied with. Respecting your inheritance, I think you know all. It is an annuity of two hundred and fifty pounds. The savings upon that annuity, and some other items to your credit, all duly carried to account, with vouchers, will place you in possession of a lump-sum of money, rather exceeding Seventeen Hundred Pounds. I am empowered to advance the cost of your preparations for your marriage out of that fund. All is told."

"Will you please tell me," said Rosa, taking the paper with a prettily knitted brow, but not opening it, "whether I am right in what I am going to say? I can understand what you tell me so very much better than what I read in law-writings. My poor papa and Eddy's father made their agreement together, as very dear and firm and fast friends, in order that we two might be very dear and firm and fast friends after them?"

"Just so."

"For the lasting good of both of us, and the lasting happiness of both of us?"

"Just so."

"That we might be to one another even much more than they had been to one another?"

"Just so."

"It was not bound upon Eddy, and it was not bound upon me, by any forfeit, in case —"

"Don't be agitated, my dear. In the case that it brings tears into your affectionate eyes even to picture to yourself, — in the case of your not marrying one another, — no, no forfeiture on either side. You would then have been my ward until you were of age. No worse would have befallen you. Bad enough, perhaps!"

"And Eddy?"

"He would have come into his partnership derived from his father, and into its arrears to his credit (if any), on attaining his majority, just as now."

Rosa, with her perplexed face and knitted brow, bit the corner of her attested copy, as she sat with her head on one side, looking abstractedly on the floor, and smoothing it with her foot.

"In short," said Mr. Grewgious, "this betrothal is a wish, a sentiment, a friendly project, tenderly expressed on both sides. That it was strongly felt, and that there was a lively hope that it would prosper, there can be no doubt. When you were both children, you began to be accustomed to it, and it *has* prospered. But circumstances alter cases; and I made this visit to-day partly, indeed principally, to discharge myself of the duty of telling you, my dear, that two young people can only be betrothed in marriage (except as a matter of convenience, and therefore mockery and misery) of their own free will, their own attachment, and their own assurance (it may or may not prove a mistaken one, but we must take our chance of that) that they are suited to each other and will make each other happy. Is it to be supposed, for example, that if either of your fathers were living now, and had any mistrust on that subject, his mind would not be changed by the change of circumstances involved in the change of your years? Untenable, unreasonable, inconclusive, and preposterous!"

Mr. Grewgious said all this as if he were reading it aloud; or, still more, as if he were repeating a lesson. So expressionless of any approach to spontaneity were his face and manner.

"I have now, my dear," he added, blurring out "Will" with his pencil, "discharged myself of what is

doubtless a formal duty in this case, but still a duty in such a case. Memorandum: 'Wishes.' My dear, is there any wish of yours that I can further?"

Rosa shook her head, with an almost plaintive air of hesitation in want of help.

"Is there any instruction that I can take from you with reference to your affairs?"

"I—I should like to settle them with Eddy first, if you please," said Rosa, plaiting the crease in her dress.

"Surely. Surely," returned Mr. Grewgious. "You two should be of one mind in all things. Is the young gentleman expected shortly?"

"He has gone away only this morning. He will be back at Christmas."

"Nothing could happen better. You will, on his return at Christmas, arrange all matters of detail with him; you will then communicate with me, and I will discharge myself (as a mere business acquittance) of my business responsibilities towards the accomplished lady in the corner window. They will accrue at that season." Blurring pencil once again. "Memorandum: 'Leave.' Yes. I will now, my dear, take my leave."

"Could I," said Rosa, rising, as he jerked out of his chair in his ungainly way,—"could I ask you most kindly to come to me at Christmas, if I had anything particular to say to you?"

"Why, certainly, certainly," he rejoined, apparently—if such a word can be used of one who had no apparent lights or shadows about him—complimented by the question. "As a particularly Angular man, I do not fit smoothly into the social circle, and consequently I have no other engagement at Christmas-time than to partake, on the twenty-fifth, of a boiled turkey and celery sauce with a—with a particularly Angular clerk I have the good fortune to possess, whose father, being a Norfolk farmer, sends him up (the turkey up), as a present to me, from the neighborhood of Norwich. I should be quite proud of your wishing to see me, my dear. As a professional Receiver of rents, so very few people *do* wish to see me, that the novelty would be bracing."

For his ready acquiescence, the grateful Rosa put her hands upon his shoulders, stood on tiptoe, and instantly kissed him.

"Lord bless me!" cried Mr. Grewgious. "Thank you, my dear. The honor is almost equal to the pleasure. Miss Twinkleton, madam, I have had a most satisfactory conversation with my ward, and I will now release you from the encumbrance of my presence."

"Nay, sir," rejoined Miss Twinkleton, rising with a gracious condescension, "say not encumbrance. Not so, by any means. I cannot permit you to say so."

"Thank you, madam. I have read in the newspapers," said Mr. Grewgious, stammering a little, "that when a distinguished visitor (not that I am one: far from it) goes to a school (not that this is one: far from it), he asks for a holiday, or some sort of grace. It being now the afternoon in the — College — of which you are the eminent head, the young ladies might gain nothing, except in name, by having the rest of the day allowed them. But if there is any young lady at all under a cloud, might I solicit —"

"Ah, Mr. Grewgious, Mr. Grewgious!" cried Miss Twinkleton, with a chastely rallying forefinger. "O you gentlemen, you gentlemen! Fie for shame, that you are so hard upon us poor maligned disciplinarians of our sex, for your sakes! But as Miss Ferdinand is at present weighed down by an incubus," — Miss Twinkleton might have said a pen-and-ink-ubus of writing out *Monsieur La Fontaine*, — "go to her, Rosa, my dear, and tell her the penalty is remitted, in deference to the intercession of your guardian, Mr. Grewgious."

Miss Twinkleton here achieved a courtesy, suggestive of marvels happening to her respected legs, and which she came out of nobly, three yards behind her starting-point.

As he held it incumbent upon him to call on Mr. Jasper before leaving Cloisterham, Mr. Grewgious went to the Gate House, and climbed its postern stair. But Mr. Jasper's door being closed, and presenting on a slip of paper the word "*Cathedral*," the fact of its being service-time was borne into the mind of Mr. Grewgious. So he descended the stair again, and, crossing the Close, paused at the great western folding-door of the Cathedral, which stood open on the fine and bright, though short-lived, afternoon, for the airing of the place.

"Dear me," said Mr. Grewgious, peeping in, "it's like looking down the throat of Old Time."

Old Time heaved a mouldy sigh from tomb and arch and vault; and gloomy shadows began to deepen in corners; and damps began to rise from green patches of stone; and jewels, cast upon the pavement of the nave from stained glass by the declining sun, began to perish. Within the grill-gate of the chancel, up the steps surmounted loomingly by the fast-darkening organ, white robes could be dimly seen, and one feeble voice, rising and falling in a cracked monotonous mutter, could at intervals be faintly heard. In the free outer air, the river, the green pastures, and the brown arable lands, the teeming hills and dales, were reddened by the sunset: while the distant little windows in windmills and farm homesteads, shone, patches of bright beaten gold. In the Cathedral, all became gray, murky, and sepulchral, and the cracked monotonous mutter went on like a dying voice, until the organ and the choir burst forth, and drowned it in a sea of music. Then the sea fell, and the dying voice made another feeble effort, and then the sea rose high, and beat its life out, and lashed the roof, and surged among the arches, and pierced the heights of the great tower; and then the sea was dry, and all was still.

Mr. Grewgious had by that time walked to the chancel-steps, where he met the living waters coming out.

"Nothing is the matter?" Thus Jasper accosted him, rather quickly. "You have not been sent for?"

"Not at all, not at all. I came down of my own accord. I have been to my pretty ward's, and am now homeward bound again."

"You found her thriving?"

"Blooming indeed. Most blooming. I merely came to tell her, seriously, what a betrothal by deceased parents is."

"And what is it, — according to your judgment?"

Mr. Grewgious noticed the whiteness of the lips that asked the question, and put it down to the chilling account of the Cathedral.

"I merely came to tell her that it could not be considered binding, against any such reason for its dissolution

as a want of affection, or want of disposition to carry it into effect, on the side of either party."

"May I ask, had you any especial reason for telling her that?"

Mr. Grewgious answered somewhat sharply, "The especial reason of doing my duty, sir. Simply that." Then he added, "Come, Mr. Jasper; I know your affection for your nephew, and that you are quick to feel on his behalf. I assure you that this implies not the least doubt of, or disrespect to, your nephew."

"You could not," returned Jasper, with a friendly pressure of his arm, as they walked on side by side, "speak more handsomely."

Mr. Grewgious pulled off his hat to smooth his head, and, having smoothed it, nodded it contentedly, and put his hat on again.

"I will wager," said Jasper, smiling, — his lips were still so white that he was conscious of it, and bit and moistened them while speaking, — "I will wager that she hinted no wish to be released from Ned."

"And you will win your wager, if you do," retorted Mr. Grewgious. "We should allow some margin for little maidenly delicacies in a young motherless creature, under such circumstances, I suppose; it is not in my line; what do you think?"

"There can be no doubt of it."

"I am glad you say so. Because," proceeded Mr. Grewgious, who had all this time very knowingly felt his way round to action on his remembrance of what she had said of Jasper himself, — "because she seems to have some little delicate instinct that all preliminary arrangements had best be made between Mr. Edwin Drood and herself, don't you see? She don't want us, don't you know?"

Jasper touched himself on the breast, and said, somewhat indistinctly, "You mean me."

Mr. Grewgious touched himself on the breast, and said, "I mean us. Therefore, let them have their little discussions and councils together, when Mr. Edwin Drood comes back here at Christmas, and then you and I will step in, and put the final touches to the business."

"So you settled with her that you would come back

at Christmas?" observed Jasper. "I see! Mr. Grewgious, as you quite fairly said just now, there is such an exceptional attachment between my nephew and me, that I am more sensitive for the dear, fortunate, happy, happy fellow than for myself. But it is only right that the young lady should be considered, as you have pointed out, and that I should accept my cue from you. I accept it. I understand that at Christmas they will complete their preparations for May, and that their marriage will be put in final train by themselves, and that nothing will remain for us but to put ourselves in train also, and have everything ready for our formal release from our trusts on Edwin's birthday."

"That is my understanding," assented Mr. Grewgious, as they shook hands to part. "God bless them both!"

"God save them both!" cried Jasper.

"I said, bless them," remarked the former, looking back over his shoulder.

"I said, save them," returned the latter. "Is there any difference?"

CHAPTER X.

SMOOTHING THE WAY.

It has been often enough remarked that women have a curious power of divining the characters of men, which would seem to be innate and instinctive; seeing that it is arrived at through no patient process of reasoning, that it can give no satisfactory or sufficient account of itself, and that it pronounces in the most confident manner even against accumulated observation on the part of the other sex. But it has not been quite so often remarked that this power (fallible, like every other human attribute) is for the most part absolutely incapable of self-revision; and that when it has delivered an adverse opinion which by all human lights is subsequently proved to have failed, it is undistinguishable from prejudice, in respect of its determination not to be corrected. Nay, the very possibility of contradiction or disproof, however remote, communicates to this feminine judgment from the first, in nine cases out of ten, the weakness attendant on the testimony of an interested witness; so personally and strongly does the fair diviner connect herself with her divination.

"Now, don't you think, Ma dear," said the Minor Canon to his mother one day as she sat at her knitting in his little book-room, "that you are rather hard on Mr. Neville?"

"No, I do *not*, Sept," returned the old lady.

"Let us discuss it, Ma."

"I have no objection to discuss it, Sept. I trust, my dear, I am always open to discussion." There was a vibration in the old lady's cap, as though she internally added, "And I should like to see the discussion that would change *my* mind!"

"Very good, Ma," said her conciliatory son. "There is nothing like being open to discussion."

"I hope not, my dear," returned the old lady, evidently shut to it.

"Well! Mr. Neville, on that unfortunate occasion, commits himself under provocation."

"And under mulled wine," added the old lady.

"I must admit the wine. Though I believe the two young men were much alike in that regard."

"I don't!" said the old lady.

"Why not, Ma?"

"Because I *don't*," said the old lady. "Still, I am quite open to discussion."

"But, my dear Ma, I cannot see how we are to discuss, if you take that line."

"Blame Mr. Neville for it, Sept, and not me," said the old lady with stately severity.

"My dear Ma! Why Mr. Neville?"

"Because," said Mrs. Crisparkle, retiring on first principles, "he came home intoxicated, and did great discredit to this house, and showed great disrespect to this family."

"That is not to be denied, Ma. He was then, and he is now, very sorry for it."

"But for Mr. Jasper's well-bred consideration in coming up to me next day, after service, in the Nave itself, with his gown still on, and expressing his hope that I had not been greatly alarmed or had my rest violently broken, I believe I might never have heard of that disgraceful transaction," said the old lady.

"To be candid, Ma, I think I should have kept it from you if I could, though I had not decidedly made up my mind. I was following Jasper out to confer with him on the subject, and to consider the expediency of his and my jointly hushing the thing up on all accounts, when I found him speaking to you. Then it was too late."

"Too late, indeed, Sept. He was still as pale as gentlemanly ashes at what had taken place in his rooms over night."

"If I *had* kept it from you, Ma, you may be sure it would have been for your peace and quiet, and for the good of the young men, and in my best discharge of my duty according to my lights."

The old lady immediately walked across the room and

kissed him, saying, "Of course, my dear Sept, I am sure of that."

"However, it became the town-talk," said Mr. Crisparkle, rubbing his ear, as his mother resumed her seat and her knitting, "and passed out of my power."

"And I said then, Sept," returned the old lady, "that I thought ill of Mr. Neville. And I say now, that I think ill of Mr. Neville. And I said then, and I say now, that I hope Mr. Neville may come to good, but I don't believe he will." Here the cap vibrated again, considerably.

"I am sorry to hear you say so, Ma —"

"I am sorry to say so, my dear," interposed the old lady, knitting on firmly, "but I can't help it."

"— For," pursued the Minor Canon, "it is undeniable that Mr. Neville is exceedingly industrious and attentive, and that he improves apace, and that he has — I hope I may say — an attachment to me."

"There is no merit in the last article, my dear," said the old lady, quickly; "and if he says there is, I think the worse of him for the boast."

"But, my dear Ma, he never said there was."

"Perhaps not," returned the old lady; "still, I don't see that it greatly signifies."

There was no impatience in the pleasant look with which Mr. Crisparkle contemplated the pretty old piece of china as it knitted; but there was, certainly, a humorous sense of its not being a piece of china to argue with very closely.

"Besides, Sept. Ask yourself what he would be without his sister. You know what an influence she has over him; you know what a capacity she has; you know that whatever he reads with you he reads with her. Give her her fair share of your praise, and how much do you leave for him?"

At these words Mr. Crisparkle fell into a little revery, in which he thought of several things. He thought of the times he had seen the brother and sister together in deep converse over one of his own old college books; now, in the rimy mornings, when he made those sharpening pilgrimages to Cloisterham Weir; now, in the sombre evenings, when he faced the wind at sunset, having

climbed his favorite outlook, a beetling fragment of monastery ruin ; and the two studious figures passed below him along the margin of the river, in which the town fires and lights already shone, making the landscape bleaker. He thought how the consciousness had stolen upon him that, in teaching one, he was teaching two ; and how he had almost insensibly adapted his explanations to both minds, — that with which his own was daily in contact, and that which he only approached through it. He thought of the gossip that had reached him from the Nuns' House, to the effect that Helena, whom he had mistrusted as so proud and fierce, submitted herself to the fairy-bride (as he called her), and learnt from her what she knew. He thought of the picturesque alliance between those two, externally so very different. He thought — perhaps most of all — could it be that these things were yet but so many weeks old, and had become an integral part of his life ?

As, whenever the Reverend Septimus fell a-musing, his good mother took it to be an infallible sign that he "wanted support," the blooming old lady made all haste to the dining-room closet, to produce from it the support embodied in a glass of Constantia and a home-made biscuit. It was a most wonderful closet, worthy of Cloisterham and of Minor Canon Corner. Above it, a portrait of Handel in a flowing wig beamed down at the spectator, with a knowing air of being up to the contents of the closet, and a musical air of intending to combine all its harmonies in one delicious fugue. No common closet with a vulgar door on hinges, openable all at once, and leaving nothing to be disclosed by degrees, this rare closet had a lock in mid-air, where two perpendicular slides met ; the one falling down, and the other pushing up. The upper slide, on being pulled down (leaving the lower a double mystery), revealed deep shelves of pickle-jars, jam-pots, tin canisters, spice-boxes, and agreeably outlandish vessels of blue and white, the luscious lodgings of preserved tamarinds and ginger. Every benevolent inhabitant of this retreat had his name inscribed upon his stomach. The pickles, in a uniform of rich brown double-breasted buttoned coat, and yellow or sombre drab continuations, announced their portly forms,

in printed capitals, as Walnut, Gherkin, Onion, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Mixed, and other members of that noble family. The jams, as being of a less masculine temperament, and as wearing curl-papers, announced themselves in feminine caligraphy, like a soft whisper, to be Raspberry, Gooseberry, Apricot, Plum, Damson, Apple, and Peach. The scene closing on these charmers, and the lower slide ascending, oranges were revealed, attended by a mighty japanned sugar-box, to temper their acerbity if unripe. Home-made biscuits waited at the Court of these Powers, accompanied by a goodly fragment of plum-cake, and various slender ladies' fingers, to be dipped into sweet wine and kissed. Lowest of all, a compact leaden vault enshrined the sweet wine and a stock of cordials: whence issued whispers of Seville Orange, Lemon, Almond, and Caraway-seed. There was a crowning air upon this closet of closets, of having been for ages hummed through by the Cathedral bell and organ, until those venerable bees had made sublimated honey of everything in store; and it was always observed that every dipper among the shelves (deep, as has been noticed, and swallowing up head, shoulders, and elbows) came forth again mellow-faced, and seeming to have undergone a saccharine transfiguration.

The Reverend Septimus yielded himself up quite as willing a victim to a nauseous medicinal herb-closet, also presided over by the china shepherdess, as to this glorious cupboard. To what amazing infusions of gentian, peppermint, gilliflower, sage, parsley, thyme, rue, rosemary, and dandelion, did his courageous stomach submit itself! In what wonderful wrappers enclosing layers of dried leaves, would he swathe his rosy and contented face, if his mother suspected him of a toothache! What botanical blotches would he cheerfully stick upon his cheek, or forehead, if the dear old lady convicted him of an imperceptible pimple there! Into this herbaceous penitentiary, situated on an upper staircase-landing, — a low and narrow whitewashed cell, where bunches of dried leaves hung from rusty hooks in the ceiling, and were spread out upon shelves, in company with portentous bottles, — would the Reverend Septimus submissively be led, like the highly popular lamb who has so

long and unresistingly been led to the slaughter, and there would he, unlike that lamb, bore nobody but himself. Not even doing that much, so that the old lady were busy and pleased, he would quietly swallow what was given him, merely taking a corrective dip of hands and face into the great bowl of dried rose-leaves, and into the other great bowl of dried lavender, and then would go out, as confident in the sweetening powers of Cloisterham Weir and a wholesome mind, as Lady Macbeth was hopeless of those of all the seas that roll.

In the present instance the good Minor Canon took his glass of Constantia with an excellent grace, and, so supported to his mother's satisfaction, applied himself to the remaining duties of the day. In their orderly and punctual progress they brought round Vesper Service and twilight. The Cathedral being very cold, he set off for a brisk trot after service; the trot to end in a charge at his favorite fragment of ruin, which was to be carried by storm, without a pause for breath.

He carried it in a masterly manner, and, not breathed even then, stood looking down upon the river. The river at Cloisterham is sufficiently near the sea to throw up oftentimes a quantity of sea-weed. An unusual quantity had come in with the last tide, and this, and the confusion of the water, and the restless dipping and flapping of the noisy gulls, and an angry light out seaward beyond the brown-sailed barges that were turning black, foreshadowed a stormy night. In his mind he was contrasting the wild and noisy sea with the quiet harbor of Minor Canon Corner, when Helena and Neville Landless passed below him. He had had the two together in his thoughts all day, and at once climbed down to speak to them together. The footing was rough in an uncertain light for any tread save that of a good climber; but the Minor Canon was as good a climber as most men, and stood beside them before many good climbers would have been half-way down.

"A wild evening, Miss Landless! Do you not find your usual walk with your brother too exposed and cold for the time of year? Or at all events, when the sun is down, and the weather is driving in from the sea?"

Helena thought not. It was their favorite walk. It was very retired.

"It is very retired," assented Mr. Crisparkle, laying hold of his opportunity straightway, and walking on with them. "It is a place of all others where one can speak without interruption, as I wish to do. Mr. Neville, I believe you tell your sister everything that passes between us?"

"Everything, sir."

"Consequently," said Mr. Crisparkle, "your sister is aware that I have repeatedly urged you to make some kind of apology for that unfortunate occurrence which befell, on the night of your arrival here."

In saying it he looked to her, and not to him; therefore it was she, and not he who replied, —

"Yes."

"I call it unfortunate, Miss Helena," resumed Mr. Crisparkle, "forasmuch as it certainly has engendered a prejudice against Neville. There is a notion about that he is a dangerously passionate fellow, of an uncontrollable and furious temper; he is really avoided as such."

"I have no doubt he is, poor fellow," said Helena, with a look of proud compassion at her brother, expressing a deep sense of his being ungenerously treated. "I should be quite sure of it, from your saying so; but what you tell me is confirmed by suppressed hints and references that I meet with every day."

"Now," Mr. Crisparkle again resumed, in a tone of mild though firm persuasion, "is not this to be regretted, and ought it not to be amended? These are early days of Neville's in Cloisterham, and I have no fear of his not outliving such a prejudice, and proving himself to have been misunderstood. But how much wiser to take action at once than to trust to uncertain time! Besides, apart from its being politic, it is right. For there can be no question that Neville was wrong."

"He was provoked," Helena submitted.

"He was the assailant," Mr. Crisparkle submitted.

They walked on in silence, until Helena raised her eyes to the Minor Canon's face, and said, almost reproachfully, "O Mr. Crisparkle, would you have Neville throw himself at young Drood's feet, or at Mr. Jasper's, who maligns him every day! In your heart you cannot mean it. From your heart you could not do it, if his case were yours."

"I have represented to Mr. Crisparkle, Helena," said Neville, with a glance of deference towards his tutor, "that if I could do it from my heart I would. But I cannot, and I revolt from the pretence. You forget, however, that to put the case to Mr. Crisparkle as his own, is to suppose Mr. Crisparkle to have done what I did."

"I ask his pardon," said Helena.

"You see," remarked Mr. Crisparkle, again laying hold of his opportunity, though with a moderate and delicate touch, "you both instinctively acknowledge that Neville did wrong! Then why stop short, and not otherwise acknowledge it?"

"Is there no difference," asked Helena, with a little faltering in her manner, "between submission to a generous spirit, and submission to a base or trivial one?"

Before the worthy Minor Canon was quite ready with his argument in reference to this nice distinction, Neville struck in, —

"Help me to clear myself with Mr. Crisparkle, Helena. Help me to convince him that I cannot be the first to make concessions without mockery and falsehood. My nature must be changed before I can do so, and it is not changed. I am sensible of inexpressible affront, and deliberate aggravation of inexpressible affront, and I am angry. The plain truth is, I am still as angry when I recall that night as I was that night."

"Neville," hinted the Minor Canon, with a steady countenance, "you have repeated that former action of your hands, which I so much dislike."

"I am sorry for it, sir, but it was involuntary. I confessed that I was still as angry."

"And I confess," said Mr. Crisparkle, "that I hoped for better things."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, sir, but it would be far worse to deceive you, and I should deceive you grossly if I pretended that you had softened me in this respect. The time may come when your powerful influence will do even that with the difficult pupil whose antecedents you know; but it has not come yet. Is this so, and in spite of my struggles against myself, Helena?"

She, whose dark eyes were watching the effect of what

he said on Mr. Crisparkle's face, replied — to Mr. Crisparkle, not to him, "It is so." After a short pause, she answered the slightest look of inquiry conceivable, in her brother's eyes, with as slight an affirmative bend of her own head; and he went on: —

"I have never yet had the courage to say to you, sir, what in full openness I ought to have said when you first talked with me on this subject. It is not easy to say, and I have been withheld by a fear of its seeming ridiculous, which is very strong upon me down to this last moment, and might, but for my sister, prevent my being quite open with you even now. — I admire Miss Bud, sir, so very much, that I cannot bear her being treated with conceit or indifference; and even if I did not feel that I had an injury against young Drood on my own account, I should feel that I had an injury against him on hers."

Mr. Crisparkle, in utter amazement, looked at Helena for corroboration, and met in her expressive face full corroboration, and a plea for advice.

"The young lady of whom you speak is, as you know, Mr. Neville, shortly to be married," said Mr. Crisparkle, gravely; "therefore your admiration, if it be of that special nature which you seem to indicate, is outrageously misplaced. Moreover, it is monstrous that you should take upon yourself to be the young lady's champion against her chosen husband. Besides, you have seen them only once. The young lady has become your sister's friend; and I wonder that your sister, even on her behalf, has not checked you in this irrational and culpable fancy."

"She has tried, sir, but uselessly. Husband or no husband, that fellow is incapable of the feeling with which I am inspired towards the beautiful young creature whom he treats like a doll. I say he is as incapable of it as he is unworthy of her. I say she is sacrificed in being bestowed upon him. I say that I love her, and despise and hate him!" This with a face so flushed, and a gesture so violent, that his sister crossed to his side and caught his arm, remonstrating, "Neville, Neville!"

Thus recalled to himself, he quickly became sensible of having lost the guard he had set upon his passionate

tendency, and covered his face with his hand, as one repentant and wretched.

Mr. Crisparkle, watching him attentively, and at the same time meditating how to proceed, walked on for some paces in silence. Then he spoke:—

“ Mr. Neville, Mr. Neville, I am sorely grieved to see in you more traces of a character as sullen, angry, and wild, as the night now closing in. They are of too serious an aspect to leave me the resource of treating the infatuation you have disclosed as undeserving serious consideration. I give it very serious consideration, and I speak to you accordingly. This feud between you and young Drood must not go on. I cannot permit it to go on any longer, knowing what I now know from you, and you living under my roof. Whatever prejudiced and unauthorized constructions your blind and envious wrath may put upon his character, it is a frank, good-natured character. I know I can trust to it for that. Now, pray observe what I am about to say. On reflection, and on your sister’s representation, I am willing to admit that, in making peace with young Drood, you have a right to be met half-way. I will engage that you shall be, and even that young Drood shall make the first advance. This condition fulfilled, you will pledge me the honor of a Christian gentleman that the quarrel is forever at an end on your side. What may be in your heart when you give him your hand, can only be known to the Searcher of all hearts; but it will never go well with you if there be any treachery there. So far, as to that; next as to what I must again speak of as your infatuation. I understand it to have been confided to me, and to be known to no other person save your sister and yourself. Do I understand aright? ”

Helena answered in a low voice, “ It is only known to us three who are here together.”

“ It is not at all known to the young lady, your friend? ”

“ On my soul, no! ”

“ I require you, then, to give me your similar and solemn pledge, Mr. Neville, that it shall remain the secret it is, and that you will take no other action whatsoever upon it than endeavoring (and that most earnestly) to

erase it from your mind. I will not tell you that it will soon pass ; I will not tell you that it is the fancy of the moment ; I will not tell you that such caprices have their rise and fall among the young and ardent every hour ; I will leave you undisturbed in the belief that it has few parallels or none, that it will abide with you a long time, and that it will be very difficult to conquer. So much the more weight shall I attach to the pledge I require from you, when it is unreservedly given."

The young man twice or thrice essayed to speak, but failed.

"Let me leave you with your sister, whom it is time you took home," said Mr. Crisparkle. "You will find me alone in my room by and by."

"Pray do not leave us yet," Helena implored him. "Another minute."

"I should not," said Neville, pressing his hand upon his face, "have needed so much as another minute, if you had been less patient with me, Mr. Crisparkle, less considerate of me, and less unpretendingly good and true. O, if in my childhood I had known such a guide !"

"Follow your guide now, Neville," murmured Helena, "and follow him to Heaven !"

There was that in her tone which broke the good Minor Canon's voice, or it would have repudiated her exaltation of him. As it was, he laid a finger on his lips, and looked towards her brother.

"To say that I give both pledges, Mr. Crisparkle, out of my innermost heart, and to say that there is no treachery in it, is to say nothing !" Thus Neville, greatly moved. "I beg your forgiveness for my miserable lapse into a burst of passion."

"Not mine, Neville, not mine. You know with whom forgiveness lies as the highest attribute conceivable. Miss Helena, you and your brother are twin children. You came into this world with the same dispositions, and you passed your younger days together surrounded by the same adverse circumstances. What you have overcome in yourself, can you not overcome in him ? You see the rock that lies in his course. Who but you can keep him clear of it ?"



"Who but you, sir?" replied Helena. "What is my influence, or my weak wisdom, compared with yours!"

"You have the wisdom of Love," returned the Minor Canon, "and it was the highest wisdom ever known upon this earth, remember. As to mine—but the less said of that commonplace commodity the better. Good night!"

She took the hand he offered her, and gratefully and almost reverently raised it to her lips.

"Tut!" said the Minor Canon, softly, "I am much overpaid!" And turned away.

Retracing his steps towards the Cathedral Close, he tried, as he went along in the dark, to think out the best means of bringing to pass what he had promised to effect, and what must somehow be done. "I shall probably be asked to marry them," he reflected, "and I would they were married and gone! But this presses first." He debated principally, whether he should write to young Drood, or whether he should speak to Jasper. The consciousness of being popular with the whole Cathedral establishment inclined him to the latter course, and the well-timed sight of the lighted Gate-house decided him to take it. "I will strike while the iron is hot," he said, "and see him now."

Jasper was lying asleep on a couch before the fire, when, having ascended the postern-stair, and received no answer to his knock at the door, Mr. Crisparkle gently turned the handle and looked in. Long afterwards he had cause to remember how Jasper sprang from the couch in a delirious state between sleeping and waking, crying out, "What is the matter? Who did it?"

"It is only I, Jasper. I am sorry to have disturbed you."

The glare of his eyes settled down into a look of recognition, and he moved a chair or two, to make a way to the fireside.

"I was dreaming at a great rate, and am glad to be disturbed from an indigestive after-dinner sleep. Not to mention that you are always welcome."

"Thank you. I am not confident," returned Mr. Crisparkle, as he sat himself down in the easy-chair placed for him, "that my subject will at first sight be quite as

welcome as myself ; but I am a minister of peace, and I pursue my subject in the interests of peace. In a word, Jasper, I want to establish peace between these two young fellows."

A very perplexed expression took hold of Mr. Jasper's face ; a very perplexing expression too, for Mr. Crisparkle could make nothing of it.

"How?" was Jasper's inquiry, in a low and slow voice, after a silence.

"For the 'How' I come to you. I want to ask you to do me the great favor and service of interposing with your nephew (I have already interposed with Mr. Neville), and getting him to write you a short note, in his lively way, saying that he is willing to shake hands. I know what a good-natured fellow he is, and what influence you have with him. And without in the least defending Mr. Neville, we must all admit that he was bitterly stung."

Jasper turned that perplexed face towards the fire. Mr. Crisparkle, continuing to observe it, found it even more perplexing than before, inasmuch as it seemed to denote (which could hardly be) some close internal calculation.

"I know that you are not prepossessed in Mr. Neville's favor," the Minor Canon was going on, when Jasper stopped him : —

"You have cause to say so. I am not, indeed."

"Undoubtedly, and I admit his lamentable violence of temper, though I hope he and I will get the better of it between us. But I have exacted a very solemn promise from him as to his future demeanor towards your nephew, if you do kindly interpose ; and I am sure he will keep it."

"You are always responsible and trustworthy, Mr. Crisparkle. Do you really feel sure that you can answer for him so confidently?"

"I do."

The perplexed and perplexing look vanished.

"Then you relieve my mind of a great dread and a heavy weight," said Jasper ; "I will do it."

Mr. Crisparkle, delighted by the swiftness and completeness of his success, acknowledged it in the handsomest terms.

"I will do it," repeated Jasper, "for the comfort of having your guaranty against my vague and unfounded fears. You will laugh, — but do you keep a Diary?"

"A line for a day; not more."

"A line for a day would be quite as much as my uneventful life would need, Heaven knows," said Jasper, taking a book from a desk; "but that my Diary is, in fact, a Diary of Ned's life too. You will laugh at this entry; you will guess when it was made: —

"Past midnight. — After what I have just now seen, I have a morbid dread upon me of some horrible consequences resulting to my dear boy, that I cannot reason with or in any way contend against. All my efforts are vain. The demoniacal passion of this Neville Landless, his strength in his fury, and his savage rage for the destruction of its object, appall me. So profound is the impression, that twice since have I gone into my dear boy's room, to assure myself of his sleeping safely, and not lying dead in his blood.'

"Here is another entry next morning: —

"Ned up and away. Light-hearted and unsuspecting as ever. He laughed when I cautioned him, and said he was as good a man as Neville Landless any day. I told him that might be, but he was not as bad a man. He continued to make light of it, but I travelled with him as far as I could, and left him most unwillingly. I am unable to shake off these dark intangible presentiments of evil, — if feelings founded upon staring facts are to be so called.'

"Again and again," said Jasper, in conclusion, twirling the leaves of the book before putting it by, "I have relapsed into these moods, as other entries show. But I have now your assurance at my back, and shall put it in my book, and make it an antidote to my black humors."

"Such an antidote, I hope," returned Mr. Crisparkle, "as will induce you before long to consign the black humors to the flames. I ought to be the last to find any fault with you this evening, when you have met my wishes so freely; but I must say, Jasper, that your devotion to your nephew has made you exaggerative here."

"You are my witness," said Jasper, shrugging his shoulders, "what my state of mind honestly was, that night, before I sat down to write, and in what words I expressed it. You remember objecting to a word I used, as being too strong? It was a stronger word than any in my Diary."

"Well, well. Try the antidote," rejoined Mr. Crisparkle, "and may it give you a brighter and better view of the case! We will discuss it no more, now. I have to thank you for myself, and I thank you sincerely."

"You shall find," said Jasper, as they shook hands, "that I will not do the thing you wish me to do by halves. I will take care that Ned, giving way at all, shall give way thoroughly."

On the third day after this conversation, he called on Mr. Crisparkle with the following letter:—

"MY DEAR JACK,

"I am touched by your account of your interview with Mr. Crisparkle, whom I much respect and esteem. At once I openly say that I forgot myself on that occasion quite as much as Mr. Landless did, and that I wish that bygone to be a bygone, and all to be right again.

"Look here, dear old boy. Ask Mr. Landless to dinner on Christmas Eve (the better the day the better the deed), and let there be only we three, and let us shake hands all round there and then, and say no more about it.

"My dear Jack,

"Ever your most affectionate,

"EDWIN DROOD.

"P. S. — Love to Miss Pussy at the next music lesson."

"You expect Mr. Neville, then?" said Mr. Crisparkle.

"I count upon his coming," said Mr. Jasper.

CHAPTER XI.

A PICTURE AND A RING.

BEHIND the most ancient part of Holborn, London, where certain gabled houses some centuries of age still stand looking on the public way, as if disconsolately looking for the Old Bourne that has long run dry, is a little nook composed of two irregular quadrangles, called Staple Inn. It is one of those nooks, the turning into which out of the clashing street imparts to the relieved pedestrian the sensation of having put cotton in his ears and velvet soles on his boots. It is one of those nooks where a few smoky sparrows twitter in smoky trees, as though they called to one another, "Let us play at country," and where a few feet of garden mould and a few yards of gravel enable them to do that refreshing violence to their tiny understandings. Moreover, it is one of those nooks which are legal nooks; and it contains a little Hall, with a little lantern in its roof; to what obstructive purposes devoted, and at whose expense, this history knoweth not.

In the days when Cloisterham took offence at the existence of a railroad afar off, as menacing that sensitive constitution, the property of us Britons; the odd fortune of which sacred institutions it is to be in exactly equal degrees croaked about, trembled for, and boasted of, whatever happens to anything, anywhere in the world; in those days no neighboring architecture of lofty proportions had arisen to overshadow Staple Inn. The westering sun bestowed bright glances on it, and the southwest wind blew into it unimpeded.

Neither wind nor sun, however, favored Staple Inn, one December afternoon towards six o'clock, when it was filled with fog, and candles shed murky and blurred rays through the windows of all its then-occupied sets of

chambers ; notably, from a set of chambers in a corner house in the little inner quadrangle, presenting in black and white over its ugly portal the mysterious inscription : —

P
J T
1747.

In which set of chambers, never having troubled his head about the inscription, unless to bethink himself at odd times on glancing up at it, that haply it might mean Perhaps John Thomas, or Perhaps Joe Tyler, sat Mr. Grewgious writing by his fire.

Who could have told, by looking at Mr. Grewgious, whether he had ever known ambition or disappointment ? He had been bred to the Bar, and had laid himself out for chamber practice ; to draw deeds ; “ convey the wise it call,” as Pistol says. But Conveyancing and he had made such a very indifferent marriage of it that they had separated by consent, — if there can be said to be separation where there has never been coming together.

No. Coy Conveyancing would not come to Mr. Grewgious. She was wooed, not won, and they went their several ways. But an Arbitration being blown towards him by some unaccountable wind, and he gaining great credit in it as one indefatigable in seeking out right and doing right, a pretty fat Receivership was next blown into his pocket by a wind more traceable to its source. So, by chance, he had found his niche. Receiver and Agent now, to two rich estates, and deputing their legal business, in an amount worth having, to a firm of solicitors on the floor below, he had snuffed out his ambition (supposing him to have ever lighted it) and had settled down with his snuffers for the rest of his life under the dry vine and fig-tree of P. J. T., who planted in seventeen-forty-seven.

Many accounts and account-books, many files of correspondence, and several strong boxes, garnished Mr. Grewgious's room. They can scarcely be represented as having lumbered it, so conscientious and precise was their orderly arrangement. The apprehension of dying suddenly, and leaving one fact or one figure with any in-

completeness or obscurity attaching to it, would have stretched Mr. Grewgious stone dead any day. The largest fidelity to a trust was the life-blood of the man. There are sorts of life-blood that course more quickly, more gayly, more attractively; but there is no better sort in circulation.

There was no luxury in his room. Even its comforts were limited to its being dry and warm, and having a snug though faded fireside. What may be called its private life was confined to the hearth, and an easy-chair, and an old-fashioned occasional round table that was brought out upon the rug after business hours, from a corner where it otherwise remained turned up like a shining mahogany shield. Behind it, when standing thus on the defensive, was a closet, usually containing something good to drink. An outer room was the clerk's room; Mr. Grewgious's sleeping-room was across the common stair; and he held some not empty cellarage at the bottom of the common stair. Three hundred days in the year, at least, he crossed over to the hotel in Furnival's Inn for his dinner, and after dinner crossed back again, to make the most of these simplicities until it should become broad business day once more, with P. J. T., date seventeen-forty-seven.

As Mr. Grewgious sat and wrote by his fire that afternoon, so did the clerk of Mr. Grewgious sit and write by *his* fire. A pale, puffy-faced, dark-haired person of thirty, with big dark eyes that wholly wanted lustre, and a dissatisfied doughy complexion, that seemed to ask to be sent to the baker's, this attendant was a mysterious being, possessed of some strange power over Mr. Grewgious. As though he had been called into existence, like a fabulous Familiar, by a magic spell which had failed when required to dismiss him, he stuck tight to Mr. Grewgious's stool, although Mr. Grewgious's comfort and convenience would manifestly have been advanced by dispossessing him. A gloomy person with tangled locks, and a general air of having been reared under the shadow of that baleful tree of Java which has given shelter to more lies than the whole botanical kingdom, Mr. Grewgious, nevertheless, treated him with unaccountable consideration.

"Now, Bazzard," said Mr. Grewgious, on the entrance of his clerk, looking up from his papers as he arranged them for the night, "what is in the wind besides fog?"

"Mr. Drood," said Bazzard.

"What of him?"

"Has called," said Bazzard.

"You might have shown him in."

"I am doing it," said Bazzard.

The visitor came in accordingly.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Grewgious, looking round his pair of office candles. "I thought you had called and merely left your name, and gone. How do you do, Mr. Edwin? Dear me, you're choking!"

"It's this fog," returned Edwin, "and it makes my eyes smart like cayenne pepper."

"Is it really so bad as that? Pray undo your wrappers. It's fortunate I have so good a fire; but Mr. Bazzard has taken care of me."

"No, I have n't," said Mr. Bazzard at the door.

"Ah! Then it follows that I must have taken care of myself without observing it," said Mr. Grewgious. "Pray be seated in my chair. No. I beg! Coming out of such an atmosphere, in *my* chair."

Edwin took the easy-chair in the corner; and the fog he had brought in with him, and the fog he took off with his great-coat and neck-shawl, was speedily licked up by the eager fire.

"I look," said Edwin, smiling, "as if I had come to stop."

"— By the by," cried Mr. Grewgious, "excuse my interrupting you; do stop. The fog may clear in an hour or two. We can have dinner in from just across Holborn. You had better take your cayenne pepper here than outside; pray stop and dine."

"You are very kind," said Edwin, glancing about him, as though attracted by the notion of a new and relishing sort of gypsy-party.

"Not at all," said Mr. Grewgious; "*you* are very kind to join issue with a bachelor in chambers, and take pot-luck. And I'll ask," said Mr. Grewgious, dropping his voice, and speaking with a twinkling eye, as if inspired with a bright thought, — "I'll ask Bazzard. He might n't like it else. Bazzard!"

Bazzard reappeared.

"Dine presently with Mr. Drood and me."

"If I am ordered to dine, of course I will, sir," was the gloomy answer.

"Save the man!" cried Mr. Grewgious. "You're not ordered; you're invited."

"Thank you, sir," said Bazzard; "in that case I don't care if I do."

"That's arranged. And perhaps you wouldn't mind," said Mr. Grewgious, "stepping over to the hotel in Furnival's, and asking them to send in materials for laying the cloth. For dinner we'll have a tureen of the hottest and strongest soup available, and we'll have the best made-dish that can be recommended, and we'll have a joint (such as a haunch of mutton), and we'll have a goose, or a turkey, or any little stuffed thing of that sort that may happen to be in the bill of fare, — in short, we'll have whatever there is on hand."

These liberal directions Mr. Grewgious issued with his usual air of reading an inventory, or repeating a lesson, or doing anything else by rote. Bazzard, after drawing out the round table, withdrew to execute them.

"I was a little delicate, you see," said Mr. Grewgious, in a lower tone, after his clerk's departure, "about employing him in the foraging or commissariat department. Because he might n't like it."

"He seems to have his own way, sir," remarked Edwin.

"His own way?" returned Mr. Grewgious. "O dear, no! Poor fellow, you quite mistake him. If he had his own way, he would n't be here."

"I wonder where he would be!" Edwin thought. But he only thought it, because Mr. Grewgious came and stood himself with his back to the other corner of the fire, and his shoulder-blades against the chimney-piece, and collected his skirts for easy conversation.

"I take it, without having the gift of prophecy, that you have done me the favor of looking in to mention that you are going down yonder — where I can tell you, you are expected — and to offer to execute any little commission from me to my charming ward, and perhaps to sharpen me up a bit in any proceedings? Eh, Mr. Edwin?"

"I called, sir, before going down, as an act of attention."

"Of attention!" said Mr. Grewgious; "ah! of course, not of impatience?"

"Impatience, sir?"

Mr. Grewgious had meant to be arch, — not that he in the remotest degree expressed that meaning, — and had brought himself into scarcely supportable proximity with the fire, as if to burn the fullest effect of his archness into himself, as other subtle impressions are burnt into hard metals. But his archness suddenly flying before the composed face and manner of his visitor, and only the fire remaining, he started and rubbed himself.

"I have lately been down yonder," said Mr. Grewgious, rearranging his skirts; "and that was what I referred to when I said I could tell you you are expected."

"Indeed, sir! Yes, I knew that Pussy was looking out for me."

"Do you keep a cat down there?" asked Mr. Grewgious.

Edwin colored a little as he explained, "I call Rosa Pussy."

"O, really," said Mr. Grewgious, smoothing down his head, "that's very affable."

Edwin glanced at his face, uncertain whether or no he seriously objected to the appellation. But Edwin might as well have glanced at the face of a clock.

"A pet name, sir," he explained again.

"Umps," said Mr. Grewgious, with a nod. But with such an extraordinary compromise between an unqualified assent and a qualified dissent that his visitor was much disconcerted.

"Did PRosa —" Edwin began, by way of recovering himself.

"PRosa?" repeated Mr. Grewgious.

"I was going to say Pussy, and changed my mind; — did she tell you anything about the Landlesses?"

"No," said Mr. Grewgious. "What is the Landlesses? An estate? A villa? A farm?"

"A brother and sister. The sister is at the Nuns' House, and has become a great friend of P —"

"PRosa's," Mr. Grewgious struck in, with a fixed face.

"She is a strikingly handsome girl, sir, and I thought she might have been described to you, or presented to you, perhaps?"

"Neither," said Mr. Grewgious. "But here is Bazzard."

Bazzard returned, accompanied by two waiters, — an immovable waiter and a flying waiter; and the three brought in with them as much fog as gave a new roar to the fire. The flying waiter, who had brought everything on his shoulders, laid the cloth with amazing rapidity and dexterity; while the immovable waiter, who had brought nothing, found fault with him. The flying waiter then highly polished all the glasses he had brought, and the immovable waiter looked through them. The flying waiter then flew across Holborn for the soup and flew back again, and then took another flight for the made-dish and flew back again, and then took another flight for the joint and poultry and flew back again, and between whiles took supplementary flights for a great variety of articles as it was discovered from time to time that the immovable waiter had forgotten them all. But let the flying waiter cleave the air as he might, he was always reproached on his return by the immovable waiter for bringing fog with him, and being out of breath. At the conclusion of the repast, by which time the flying waiter was severely blown, the immovable waiter gathered up the tablecloth under his arm with a grand air, and having sternly (not to say with indignation) looked on at the flying waiter while he set clean glasses round, directed a valedictory glance towards Mr. Grewgious, conveying, "Let it be clearly understood between us that the reward is mine, and that Nil is the claim of this slave," and pushed the flying waiter before him out of the room.

It was like a highly finished miniature painting representing My Lords of the Circumlocutional Department, Commandership-in-Chief of any sort, Government. It was quite an edifying little picture to be hung on the line in the National Gallery.

As the fog had been the proximate cause of this sumptuous repast, so the fog served for its general sauce. To hear the out-door clerks sneezing, wheezing, and beating

their feet on the gravel was a zest far surpassing Doctor Kitchener's. To bid, with a shiver, the unfortunate flying waiter shut the door before he had opened it, was a condiment of a profounder flavor than Harvey. And here let it be noticed parenthetically that the leg of this young man in its application to the door evinced the finest sense of touch; always preceding himself and tray (with something of an angling air about it) by some seconds, and always lingering after he and the tray had disappeared, like Macbeth's leg when accompanying him off the stage with reluctance to the assassination of Duncan.

The host had gone below to the cellar, and had brought up bottles of ruby, straw-colored, and golden drinks, which had ripened long ago in lands where no fogs are, and had since lain slumbering in the shade. Sparkling and tingling after so long a nap, they pushed at their corks to help the corkscrew (like prisoners helping rioters to force their gates), and danced out gayly. If P. J. T. in seventeen-forty-seven, or in any other year of his period, drank such wines, then, for a certainty, P. J. T. was Pretty Jolly Too.

Externally, Mr. Grewgious showed no signs of being mellowed by these glowing vintages. Instead of his drinking them, they might have been poured over him in his high-dried snuff form, and run to waste, for any lights and shades they caused to flicker over his face. Neither was his manner influenced. But, in his wooden way, he had observant eyes for Edwin; and when, at the end of dinner, he motioned Edwin back to his own easy-chair in the fireside corner, and Edwin luxuriously sank into it after very brief remonstrance, Mr. Grewgious, as he turned his seat round towards the fire too, and smoothed his head and face, might have been seen looking at his visitor between his smoothing fingers.

"Bazzard!" said Mr. Grewgious, suddenly turning to him.

"I follow you, sir," returned Bazzard, who had done his work of consuming meat and drink, in a workmanlike manner, though mostly in speechlessness.

"I drink to you, Bazzard; Mr. Edwin, success to Mr. Bazzard!"

"Success to Mr. Bazzard!" echoed Edwin, with a

totally unfounded appearance of enthusiasm, and with the unspoken addition, "What in, I wonder!"

"And May!" pursued Mr. Grewgious, — "I am not at liberty to be definite — May! — my conversational powers are so very limited that I know I shall not come well out of this — May! — it ought to be put imaginatively, but I have no imagination — May! — the thorn of anxiety is as nearly the mark as I am likely to get — May it come out at last!"

Mr. Bazzard, with a frowning smile at the fire, put a hand into his tangled locks, as if the thorn of anxiety were there; then into his waistcoat, as if it were there; then into his pockets, as if it were there. In all these movements he was closely followed by the eyes of Edwin, as if that young gentleman expected to see the thorn in action. It was not produced, however, and Mr. Bazzard merely said, "I follow you, sir, and I thank you."

"I am going," said Mr. Grewgious, jingling his glass on the table with one hand and bending aside under cover of the other to whisper to Edwin, "to drink to my ward. But I put Bazzard first. He might n't like it else."

This was said with a mysterious wink; or what would have been a wink if, in Mr. Grewgious's hands, it could have been quick enough. So Edwin winked responsively without the least idea what he meant by doing so.

"And now," said Mr. Grewgious, "I devote a bump-er to the fair and fascinating Miss Rosa. Bazzard, the fair and fascinating Miss Rosa!"

"I follow you, sir," said Bazzard, "and I pledge you!"

"And so do I!" said Edwin.

"Lord bless me!" cried Mr. Grewgious, breaking the blank silence which of course ensued, though why these pauses *should* come upon us when we have performed any small social rite not directly inducive of self-examination or mental despondency who can tell! "I am a particularly Angular man, and yet I fancy (if I may use the word, not having a morsel of fancy) that I could draw a picture of a true lover's state of mind to-night."

"Let us follow you, sir," said Bazzard, "and have the picture."

“Mr. Edwin will correct it where it’s wrong,” resumed Mr. Grewgious, “and will throw in a few touches from the life. I dare say it is wrong in many particulars, and wants many touches from the life, for I was born a Chip, and have neither soft sympathies nor soft experiences. Well! I hazard the guess that the true lover’s mind is completely permeated by the beloved object of his affections. I hazard the guess that her dear name is precious to him, cannot be heard or repeated without emotion, and is preserved sacred. If he has any distinguishing appellation of fondness for her, it is reserved for her and is not for common ears. A name that it would be a privilege to call her by, being alone with her own bright self, it would be a liberty, a coldness, an insensibility, almost a breach of good faith, to flaunt elsewhere.”

It was wonderful to see Mr. Grewgious sitting bolt upright, with his hands on his knees continuously chopping this discourse out of himself, much as a charity-boy with a very good memory might get his catechism said, and evincing no correspondent emotion whatever, unless in a certain occasional little tingling perceptible at the end of his nose.

“My picture,” Mr. Grewgious proceeded, “goes on to represent (under correction from you, Mr. Edwin) the true lover as ever impatient to be in the presence or vicinity of the beloved object of his affections, as caring very little for his ease in any other society, and as constantly seeking that. If I was to say seeking that as a bird seeks its nest, I should make an ass of myself, because that would trench upon what I understand to be poetry; and I am so far from trenching upon poetry at any time, that I never to my knowledge got within ten thousand miles of it. And I am besides totally unacquainted with the habits of birds, except the birds of Staple Inn, who seek their nests on ledges and in gutter-pipes and chimney-pots, not constructed for them by the beneficent hand of Nature. I beg, therefore, to be understood as foregoing the bird’s-nest. But my picture does represent the true lover as having no existence separable from that of the beloved object of his affections, and as living at once a doubled life and a halved life. And if I

do not clearly express what I mean by that, it is either for the reason that having no conversational powers, I cannot express what I mean, or that having no meaning, I do not mean what I fail to express. Which, to the best of my belief, is not the case."

Edwin had turned red and turned white as certain points of this picture came into the light. He now sat looking at the fire and bit his lip.

"The speculations of an Angular man," resumed Mr. Grewgious, still sitting and speaking exactly as before, "are probably erroneous on so globular a topic. But I figure to myself (subject as before to Mr. Edwin's correction) that there can be no coolness, no lassitude, no doubt, no indifference, no half-fire and half-smoke state of mind in a real lover. Pray am I at all near the mark in my picture?"

As abrupt in his conclusion as in his commencement and progress, he jerked this inquiry at Edwin, and stopped when one might have supposed him in the middle of his oration.

"I should say, sir," stammered Edwin, "as you refer the question to me —"

"Yes," said Mr. Grewgious, "I refer it to you as an authority."

"I should say then, sir," Edwin went on, embarrassed, "that the picture you have drawn is generally correct; but I submit that perhaps you may be rather hard upon the unlucky lover."

"Likely so," assented Mr. Grewgious, — "likely so. I am a hard man in the grain."

"He may not show," said Edwin, "all he feels; or he may not —"

There he stopped so long to find the rest of his sentence that Mr. Grewgious rendered his difficulty a thousand times the greater by unexpectedly striking in with, —

"No, to be sure; he *may* not!"

After that they all sat silent; the silence of Mr. Bazzard being occasioned by slumber.

"His responsibility is very great though," said Mr. Grewgious, at length, with his eyes on the fire.

Edwin nodded assent, with *his* eyes on the fire.

"And let him be sure that he trifles with no one,"

said Mr. Grewgious ; " neither with himself nor with any other."

Edwin bit his lip again, and still sat looking at the fire.

" He must not make a plaything of a treasure. Woe betide him if he does ! Let him take that well to heart," said Mr. Grewgious.

Though he said these things in short sentences, much as the supposititious charity-boy just now referred to might have repeated a verse or two from the Book of Proverbs, there was something dreamy (for so literal a man) in the way in which he now shook his right forefinger at the live coals in the grate, and again fell silent.

But not for long. As he sat upright and stiff in his chair, he suddenly rapped his knees, like the carved image of some queer Joss or other coming out of its revery, and said, " We must finish this bottle, Mr. Edwin. Let me help you. I'll help Bazzard, too, though he is asleep. He might n't like it else."

He helped them both, and helped himself, and drained his glass, and stood it bottom upward on the table, as though he had just caught a bluebottle in it.

" And now, Mr. Edwin," he proceeded, wiping his mouth and hands upon his handkerchief, " to a little piece of business. You received from me, the other day, a certified copy of Miss Rosa's father's will. You knew its contents before, but you received it from me as a matter of business. I should have sent it to Mr. Jasper, but for Miss Rosa's wishing it to come straight to you, in preference. You received it ?"

" Quite safely, sir."

" You should have acknowledged its receipt," said Mr. Grewgious, " business being business all the world over. However, you did not."

" I meant to have acknowledged it when I first came in this evening, sir."

" Not a business-like acknowledgment," returned Mr. Grewgious ; " however, let that pass. Now, in that document you have observed a few words of kindly allusion to its being left to me to discharge a little trust, confided to me in conversation, at such time as I in my discretion may think best."

" Yes, sir."

"Mr Edwin, it came into my mind just now, when I was looking at the fire, that I could, in my discretion, acquit myself of that trust at no better time than the present. Favor me with your attention half a minute."

He took a bunch of keys from his pocket, singled out by the candle-light the key he wanted, and then, with a candle in his hand, went to a bureau or *escritoire*, unlocked it, touched the spring of a little secret drawer, and took from it an ordinary ring-case made for a single ring. With this in his hand, he returned to his chair. As he held it up for the young man to see, his hand trembled.

"Mr. Edwin, this rose of diamonds and rubies, delicately set in gold, was a ring belonging to Miss Rosa's mother. It was removed from her dead hand, in my presence, with such distracted grief as I hope it may never be my lot to contemplate again. Hard man as I am, I am not hard enough for that. See how bright these stones shine!" opening the case. "And yet the eyes that were so much brighter, and that so often looked upon them with a light and a proud heart, have been ashes among ashes, and dust among dust, some years! If I had any imagination (which it is needless to say I have not), I might imagine that the lasting beauty of these stones was almost cruel."

He closed the case again as he spoke.

"This ring was given to the young lady who was drowned so early in her beautiful and happy career, by her husband, when they first plighted their faith to one another. It was he who removed it from her unconscious hand, and it was he who, when his death drew very near, placed it in mine. The trust in which I received it was, that, you and Miss Rosa growing to manhood and womanhood, and your betrothal prospering and coming to maturity, I should give it to you to place upon her finger. Failing those desired results, it was to remain in my possession."

Some trouble was in the young man's face, and some indecision was in the action of his hand, as Mr. Grewgious, looking steadfastly at him, gave him the ring.

"Your placing it on her finger," said Mr. Grewgious, "will be the solemn seal upon your strict fidelity to the

living and the dead. You are going to her, to make the last irrevocable preparations for your marriage. Take it with you."

The young man took the little case and placed it in his breast.

"If anything should be amiss, if anything should be even slightly wrong between you, if you should have any secret consciousness, that you are committing yourself to this step for no higher reason than because you have long been accustomed to look forward to it, then," said Mr. Grewgious, "I charge you once more, by the living and by the dead, to bring that ring back to me!"

Here Bazzard awoke himself by his own snoring; and, as is usual in such cases, sat apoplectically staring at vacancy, as defying vacancy to accuse him of having been asleep.

"Bazzard!" said Mr. Grewgious, harder than ever.

"I follow you, sir," said Bazzard, "and I have been following you."

"In discharge of a trust, I have handed Mr. Edwin Drood a ring of diamonds and rubies. You see?"

Edwin reproduced the little case, and opened it; and Bazzard looked into it.

"I follow you both, sir," returned Bazzard, "and I witness the transaction."

Evidently anxious to get away and be alone, Edwin Drood now resumed his outer clothing, muttering something about time and appointments. The fog was reported no clearer (by the flying waiter, who alighted from a speculative flight in the coffee interest), but he went out into it; and Bazzard, after his manner, "followed" him.

Mr. Grewgious, left alone, walked softly and slowly to and fro for an hour and more. He was restless to-night, and seemed dispirited.

"I hope I have done right," he said. "The appeal to him seemed necessary. It was hard to lose the ring, and yet it must have gone from me very soon."

He closed the empty little drawer with a sigh, and shut and locked the escritoire, and came back to the solitary fireside.

"Her ring," he went on. "Will it come back to me?"

My mind hangs about her ring very uneasily to-night. But that is explainable. I have had it so long, and I have prized it so much! I wonder — ”

He was in a wondering mood as well as a restless; for, though he checked himself at that point and took another walk, he resumed his wondering when he sat down again.

“ I wonder (for the ten thousandth time, and what a weak fool I, for what can it signify now!) whether he confided the charge of their orphan child to me because he knew — Good God, how like her mother she has become !

“ I wonder whether he ever so much as suspected that some one doted on her at a hopeless, speechless distance when he struck in and won her! I wonder whether it ever crept into his mind who that unfortunate some one was !

“ I wonder whether I shall sleep to-night! At all events, I will shut out the world with the bedclothes and try.”

Mr. Grewgious crossed the staircase to his raw and foggy bedroom, and was soon ready for bed. Dimly catching sight of his face in the misty looking-glass, he held his candle to it for a moment.

“ A likely some one, *you*, to come into anybody’s thoughts in such an aspect!” he exclaimed. “ There, there! there! Get to bed, poor man, and cease to jabber ! ”

With that he extinguished his light, pulled up the bedclothes around him, and with another sigh shut out the world. And yet there are such unexplored romantic nooks in the unlikeliest men, that even old tinderous and touchwoody P. J. T. Possibly Jabbered Thus, at some odd times, in or about seventeen-forty-seven.

CHAPTER XII.

A NIGHT WITH DURDLES.

WHEN Mr. Sapsea has nothing better to do towards evening, and finds the contemplation of his own profundity becoming a little monotonous in spite of the vastness of the subject, he often takes an airing in the Cathedral Close and thereabout. He likes to pass the churchyard with a swelling air of proprietorship, and to encourage in his breast a sort of benignant-landlord feeling in that he has been bountiful towards that meritorious tenant, Mrs. Sapsea, and has publicly given her a prize. He likes to see a stray face or two looking in through the railings and perhaps reading his inscription. Should he meet a stranger coming from the churchyard with a quick step, he is morally convinced that the stranger is "with a blush retiring," as monumentally directed.

Mr. Sapsea's importance has received enhancement, for he has become Mayor of Cloisterham. Without mayors and many of them, it cannot be disputed that the whole framework of society—Mr. Sapsea is confident that he invented that forcible figure—would fall to pieces. Mayors have been knighted for "going up" with addresses: explosive machines intrepidly discharging shot and shell into the English Grammar. Mr. Sapsea may "go up" with an address. Rise, Sir Thomas Sapsea! Of such is the salt of the earth.

Mr. Sapsea has improved the acquaintance of Mr. Jasper since their first meeting to partake of port, epitaph, backgammon, beef, and salad. Mr. Sapsea has been received at the Gate House with kindred hospitality; and on that occasion Mr. Jasper seated himself at the piano, and sang to him, tickling his ears,—figuratively, long enough to present a considerable area for tickling.

What Mr. Sapsea likes in that young man, is, that he is always ready to profit by the wisdom of his elders, and that he is sound, sir, at the core. In proof of which he sang to Mr. Sapsea that evening no kickshaw ditties, favorites with national enemies, but gave him the genuine George the Third home-brewed, exhorting him (as "my brave boys") to reduce to a smashed condition all other islands but this island, and all continents, peninsulas, isthmuses, promontories, and other geographical forms of land soever, besides sweeping the seas in all directions. In short, he rendered it pretty clear that Providence made a distinct mistake in originating so small a nation of hearts of oak, and so many other verminous peoples.

Mr. Sapsea, walking slowly this moist evening near the churchyard with his hands behind him on the lookout for a blushing and retiring stranger, turns a corner and comes instead into the goodly presence of the Dean conversing with the Verger and Mr. Jasper. Mr. Sapsea makes his obeisance, and is instantly stricken far more ecclesiastical than any Archbishop of York or Canterbury.

"You are evidently going to write a book about us, Mr. Jasper," quoth the Dean; "to write a book about us. Well! We are very ancient, and we ought to make a good book. We are not so richly endowed in possessions as in age; but perhaps you will put *that* in your book, among other things, and call attention to our wrongs."

Mr. Tope, as in duty bound, is greatly entertained by this.

"I really have no intention at all, sir," replies Jasper, "of turning author or archæologist. It is but a whim of mine. And even for my whim, Mr. Sapsea here is more accountable than I am."

"How so, Mr. Mayor?" says the Dean, with a nod of good-natured recognition of his Fetch. "How is that, Mr. Mayor?"

"I am not aware," Mr. Sapsea remarks, looking about him for information, "to what the Very Reverend the Dean does me the honor of referring." And then falls to studying his original in minute points of detail.

"Durdles," Mr. Tope hints.

"Ay!" the Dean echoes; "Durdles, Durdles!"

"The truth is, sir," explains Jasper, "that my curiosity in the man was first really stimulated by Mr. Sapsea. Mr. Sapsea's knowledge of mankind, and power of drawing out whatever is recluse or odd around him, first led to my bestowing a second thought upon the man: though of course I had met him constantly about. You would not be surprised by this, Mr. Dean, if you had seen Mr. Sapsea deal with him in his own parlor, as I did."

"Oh!" cries Sapsea, picking up the ball thrown to him with ineffable complacency and pomposity; "yes, yes. The Very Reverend the Dean refers to that? Yes. I happened to bring Durdles and Mr. Jasper together. I regard Durdles as a Character."

"A character, Mr. Sapsea, that with a few skilful touches you turn inside out," says Jasper.

"Nay, not quite that," returns the lumbering auctioneer. "I may have a little influence over him, perhaps; and a little insight into his character, perhaps. The Very Reverend the Dean will please to bear in mind that I have seen the world." Here Mr. Sapsea gets a little behind the Dean, to inspect his coat-buttons.

"Well!" says the Dean, looking about him to see what has become of his copyist: "I hope, Mr. Mayor, you will use your study and knowledge of Durdles to the good purpose of exhorting him not to break our worthy and respected Choir-Master's neck; we cannot afford it; his head and voice are much too valuable to us."

Mr. Tope is again highly entertained, and, having fallen into respectful convulsions of laughter, subsides into a deferential murmur, importing that surely any gentleman would deem it a pleasure and an honor to have his neck broken, in return for such a compliment from such a source.

"I will take it upon myself, sir," observes Sapsea, loftily, "to answer for Mr. Jasper's neck. I will tell Durdles to be careful of it. He will mind what *I* say. How is it at present endangered?" he inquires, looking about him with magnificent patronage.

"Only by my making a moonlight expedition with Dur-

dles among the tombs, vaults, towers, and ruins," returns Jasper. "You remember suggesting when you brought us together, that, as a lover of the picturesque, it might be worth my while?"

"I remember!" replies the auctioneer. And the solemn idiot really believes that he does remember.

"Profiting by your hint," pursues Jasper, "I have had some day-rambles with the extraordinary old fellow, and we are to make a moonlight hole-and-corner exploration to-night."

"And here he is," says the Dean.

Durdles, with his dinner-bundle in his hand, is indeed beheld slouching towards them. Slouching nearer, and perceiving the Dean, he pulls off his hat, and is slouching away with it under his arm, when Mr. Sapsea stops him.

"Mind you take care of my friend," is the injunction Mr. Sapsea lays upon him.

"What friend o' yours is dead?" asks Durdles.

"No orders has come in for any friend o' yours."

"I mean my live friend, there."

"Oh! Him?" says Durdles. "He can take care of himself, can Mister Jarsper."

"But do you take care of him too," says Sapsea.

Whom Durdles (there being command in his tone) surreily surveys from head to foot.

"With submission to his Reverence the Dean, if you'll mind what concerns you, Mr. Sapsea, Durdles he'll mind what concerns him."

"You're out of temper," says Mr. Sapsea, winking to the company to observe how smoothly he will manage him. "My friend concerns me, and Mr. Jasper is my friend. And you are my friend."

"Don't you get into a bad habit of boasting," retorts Durdles, with a grave cautionary nod. "It'll grow upon you."

"You are out of temper," says Sapsea again, reddening, but again winking to the company.

"I own to it," returns Durdles; "I don't like liberties."

Mr. Sapsea winks a third wink to the company, as who should say, "I think you will agree with me that I have settled *his* business," and stalks out of the controversy.

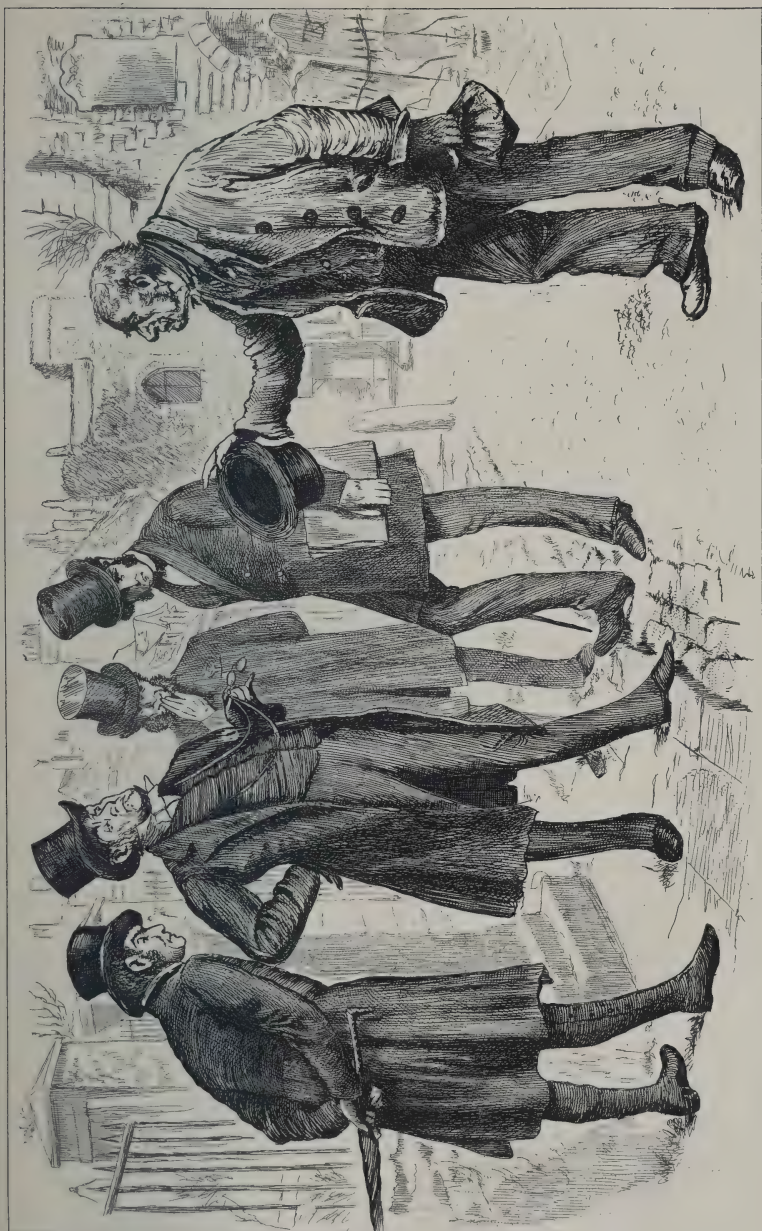
Durdles then gives the Dean a good evening, and adding, as he puts his hat on, "You'll find me at home, Mister Jarsper, as agreed, when you want me; I'm a going home to clean myself," soon slouches out of sight. This going home to clean himself is one of the man's incomprehensible compromises with inexorable facts; he, and his hat, and his boots, and his clothes, never showing any trace of cleaning, but being uniformly in one condition of dust and grit.

The lamplighter now dotting the quiet Close with specks of light, and running at a great rate up and down his little ladder with that object, — his little ladder under the sacred shadow of whose inconvenience generations had grown up, and which all Cloisterham would have stood aghast at the idea of abolishing, — the Dean withdraws to his dinner, Mr. Tope to his tea, and Mr. Jasper to his piano. There, with no light but that of the fire, he sits chanting choir-music in a low and beautiful voice for two or three hours; in short, until it has been for some time dark, and the moon is about to rise.

Then he closes his piano softly, softly changes his coat for a pea-jacket with a goodly wicker-cased bottle in its largest pocket, and, putting on a low-crowned, flap-brimmed hat, goes softly out. Why does he move so softly to-night? No outward reason is apparent for it. Can there be any sympathetic reason crouching darkly within him?

Repairing to Durdles's unfinished house, or hole in the city wall, and seeing a light within it, he softly picks his course among the gravestones, monuments, and stony lumber of the yard, already touched here and there, side-wise, by the rising moon. The two journeymen have left their two great saws sticking in their blocks of stone; and two skeleton journeymen out of the Dance of Death might be grinning in the shadow of their sheltering sentry-boxes about to slash away at cutting out the gravestones of the next two people destined to die in Cloisterham. Likely enough the two think little of that now, being alive, and perhaps merry. Curious to make a guess at the two, — or say at one of the two!

"Ho! Durdles!"



The light moves, and he appears with it at the door. He would seem to have been "cleaning himself" with the aid of a bottle, jug, and tumbler; for no other cleansing instruments are visible in the bare brick room with rafters overhead and no plastered ceiling, into which he shows his visitor.

"Are you ready?"

"I am ready, Mister Jarsper. Let the old uns come out if they dare when we go among their tombs. My spirits is ready for 'em."

"Do you mean animal spirits, or ardent?"

"The one's the t' other," answers Durdles, "and I mean 'em both."

He takes a lantern from a hook, puts a match or two in his pocket wherewith to light it, should there be need, and they go out together, dinner-bundle and all.

Surely an unaccountable sort of expedition! That Durdles himself, who is always prowling among old graves and ruins like a Ghoul, — that he should be stealing forth to climb and dive and wander without an object, is nothing extraordinary; but that the Choir-Master or any one else should hold it worth his while to be with him, and to study moonlight effects in such company, is another affair. Surely an unaccountable sort of expedition therefore!

"Ware that there mound by the yard-gate, Mister Jarsper."

"I see it. What is it?"

"Lime."

Mr. Jasper stops, and waits for him to come up, for he lags behind. "What you call quicklime?"

"Ay!" says Durdles; "quick enough to eat your boots. With a little handy stirring, quick enough to eat your bones."

They go on, presently passing the red windows of the Travellers' Twopenny and emerging into the clear moonlight of the Monks' Vineyard. This crossed, they come to Minor Canon Corner, of which the greater part lies in shadow until the moon shall rise higher in the sky.

The sound of a closing house-door strikes their ears, and two men come out. These are Mr. Crisparkle and Neville. Jasper, with a strange and sudden smile upon

his face, lays the palm of his hand upon the breast of Durdles, stopping him where he stands.

At that end of Minor Canon Corner the shadow is profound in the existing state of the light : at that end, too, there is a piece of old dwarf wall, breast high, the only remaining boundary of what was once a garden, but is now the thoroughfare. Jasper and Durdles would have turned this wall in another instant, but, stopping so short, stand behind it.

"Those two are only sauntering," Jasper whispers ; "they will go out into the moonlight soon. Let us keep quiet here, or they will detain us, or want to join us, or what not."

Durdles nods assent, and falls to munching some fragments from his bundle. Jasper folds his arms upon the top of the wall, and, with his chin resting on them, watches. He takes no note whatever of the Minor Canon, but watches Neville, as though his eye were at the trigger of a loaded rifle and he had covered him, and were going to fire. A sense of destructive power is so expressed in his face, that even Durdles pauses in his munching, and looks at him, with an unmunched something in his cheek.

Meanwhile Mr. Crisparkle and Neville walk to and fro, quietly talking together. What they say cannot be heard consecutively, but Mr. Jasper has already distinguished his own name more than once.

"This is the first day of the week," Mr. Crisparkle can be distinctly heard to observe as they turn back, "and the last day of the week is Christmas Eve."

"You may be certain of me, sir."

The echoes were favorable at those points, but as the two approach the sound of their talking becomes confused again. The word "confidence," shattered by the echoes, but still capable of being pieced together, is uttered by Mr. Crisparkle. As they draw still nearer, this fragment of a reply is heard : "Not deserved yet, but shall be, sir." As they turn away again Jasper again hears his own name in connection with the words from Mr. Crisparkle, "Remember that I said I answered for you confidently." Then the sound of their talk becomes confused again ; they halting for a little while, and some earnest

action on the part of Neville succeeding. When they move once more, Mr. Crisparkle is seen to look up at the sky, and to point before him. They then slowly disappear, passing out into the moonlight at the opposite end of the Corner.

It is not until they are gone that Mr. Jasper moves. But then he turns to Durdles, and bursts into a fit of laughter. Durdles, who still has that suspended something in his cheek, and who sees nothing to laugh at, stares at him until Mr. Jasper lays his face down on his arms to have his laugh out. Then Durdles bolts the something, as if desperately resigning himself to indigestion.

Among those secluded nooks there is very little stir or movement after dark. There is little enough in the high-tide of the day, but there is next to none at night. Besides that the cheerfully frequented High Street lies nearly parallel to the spot (the old Cathedral rising between the two), and is the natural channel in which the Cloisterham traffic flows, a certain awful hush pervades the ancient pile, the cloisters, and the churchyard, after dark, which not many people care to encounter. Ask the first hundred citizens of Cloisterham, met at random in the streets at noon, if they believed in Ghosts, they would tell you no; but put them to choose at night between these eery Precincts and the thoroughfare of shops, and you would find that ninety-nine declared for the longer round and the more frequented way. The cause of this is not to be found in any local superstition that attaches to the Precincts, — albeit a mysterious lady, with a child in her arms and a rope dangling from her neck, has been seen flitting about there by sundry witnesses as intangible as herself, — but it is to be sought in the innate shrinking of dust with the breath of life in it from dust out of which the breath of life has passed; also, in the widely diffused, and almost as widely unacknowledged, reflection: "If the dead do, under any circumstances, become visible to the living, these are such likely surroundings for the purpose that I, the living, will get out of them as soon as I can."

Hence, when Mr. Jasper and Durdles pause to glance around them, before descending into the crypt by a small

side door, of which the latter has a key, the whole expanse of moonlight in their view is utterly deserted. One might fancy that the tide of life was stemmed by Mr. Jasper's own Gate House. The murmur of the tide is heard beyond ; but no wave passes the archway, over which his lamp burns red behind his curtain, as if the building were a lighthouse.

They enter, locking themselves in, descend the rugged steps, and are down in the crypt. The lantern is not wanted, for the moonlight strikes in at the groined windows, bare of glass, the broken frames for which cast patterns on the ground. The heavy pillars which support the roof engender masses of black shade, but between them there are lanes of light. Up and down these lanes they walk, Durdles discoursing of the " old uns " he yet counts on disinterring, and slapping a wall, in which he considers " a whole family on 'em " to be stoned and earthed up, just as if he were a familiar friend of the family. The taciturnity of Durdles is for the time overcome by Mr. Jasper's wicker bottle, which circulates freely ; — in the sense, that is to say, that its contents enter freely into Mr. Durdles's circulation, while Mr. Jasper only rinses his mouth once, and casts forth the rinsing.

They are to ascend the great Tower. On the steps by which they rise to the Cathedral, Durdles pauses for new store of breath. The steps are very dark, but out of the darkness they can see the lanes of light they have traversed. Durdles seats himself upon a step. Mr. Jasper seats himself upon another. The odor from the wicker bottle (which has somehow passed into Durdles's keeping) soon intimates that the cork has been taken out ; but this is not ascertainable through the sense of sight, since neither can descry the other. And yet, in talking, they turn to one another, as though their faces could commune together.

" This is good stuff, Mr. Jarsper ! "

" It is very good stuff, I hope. I bought it on purpose."

" They don't show, you see, the old uns don't, Mister Jarsper ! "

" It would be a more confused world than it is, if they could."

"Well, it *would* lead towards a mixing of things," Durdles acquiesces; pausing on the remark, as if the idea of ghosts had not previously presented itself to him in a merely inconvenient light, domestically, or chronologically. "But do you think there may be Ghosts of other things, though not of men and women?"

"What things? Flower-beds and watering-pots? Horses and harness?"

"No. Sounds."

"What sounds?"

"Cries."

"What cries do you mean? Chairs to mend?"

"No. I mean screeches. Now, I'll tell you, Mister Jarsper. Wait a bit till I put the bottle right." Here the cork is evidently taken out again, and replaced again. "There! *Now* it's right! This time last year, only a few days later, I happened to have been doing what was correct by the season, in the way of giving it the welcome it had a right to expect, when them town-boys set on me at their worst. At length I gave 'em the slip and turned in here. And here I fell asleep. And what woke me? The ghost of a cry. The ghost of one terrific shriek, which shriek was followed by the ghost of the howl of a dog, a long, dismal, woful howl, such as a dog gives when a person's dead. That was *my* last Christmas Eve."

"What do you mean?" is the very abrupt, and, one might say, fierce retort.

"I mean that I made inquiries everywhere about, and that no living ears but mine heard either that cry or that howl. So I say they was both ghosts; though why they came to me, I've never made out."

"I thought you were another kind of man," says Jarsper, scornfully.

"So I thought myself," answers Durdles, with his usual composure; "and yet I was picked out for it."

Jarsper had risen suddenly, when he asked him what he meant, and he now says, "Come, we shall freeze here; lead the way."

Durdles complies, not over-steadily; opens the door at the top of the steps with the key he has already used; and so emerges on the Cathedral level, in a passage at

the side of the chancel. Here, the moonlight is so very bright again that the colors of the nearest stained-glass window are thrown upon their faces. The appearance of the unconscious Durdles, holding the door open for his companion to follow, as if from the grave, is ghastly enough, with a purple band across his face, and a yellow splash upon his brow ; but he bears the close scrutiny of his companion in an insensible way, although it is prolonged while the latter fumbles among his pockets for a key confided to him that will open an iron gate so to enable them to pass to the staircase of the great tower.

"That and the bottle are enough for you to carry," he says, giving it to Durdles, "hand your bundle to me ; I am younger and longer-winded than you." Durdles hesitates for a moment between bundle and bottle ; but gives the preference to the bottle as being by far the better company, and consigns the dry weight to his fellow-explorer.

Then they go up the winding staircase of the great tower, toilsomely, turning and turning, and lowering their heads to avoid the stairs above, or the rough stone pivot around which they twist. Durdles has lighted his lantern, by drawing from the cold hard wall a spark of that mysterious fire which lurks in everything, and, guided by this speck, they clamber up among the cobwebs and the dust. Their way lies through strange places. Twice or thrice they emerge into level, low-arched galleries, whence they can look down into the moonlit nave ; and where Durdles, waving his lantern, shows the dim angels' heads upon the corbels of the roof, seeming to watch their progress. Anon, they turn into narrower and steeper staircases, and the night air begins to blow upon them, and the chirp of some startled jackdaw or frightened rook precedes the heavy beating of wings in a confined space, and the beating down of dust and straws upon their heads. At last, leaving their light behind a stair, — for it blows fresh up here, — they look down on Cloisterham, fair to see in the moonlight ; its ruined habitations and sanctuaries of the dead, at the tower's base ; its moss-softened, red-tiled roofs and red-brick houses of the living, clustered beyond ; its river winding down from the mist on the horizon, as though

that were its source, and already heaving with a restless knowledge of its approach towards the sea.

Once again, an unaccountable expedition this! Jasper (always moving softly, with no visible reason) contemplates the scene, and especially that stillest part of it which the Cathedral overshadows. But he contemplates Durdles quite as curiously, and Durdles is by times conscious of his watchful eyes.

Only by times, because Durdles is growing drowsy. As aeronauts lighten the load they carry, when they wish to rise, similarly Durdles has lightened the wicker bottle in coming up. Snatches of sleep surprise him on his legs, and stop him in his talk. A mild fit of calenture seizes him, in which he deems that the ground, so far below, is on a level with the tower, and would as lief walk off the tower into the air as not. Such is his state when they begin to come down. And as aeronauts make themselves heavier when they wish to descend, similarly Durdles charges himself with more liquid from the wicker bottle, that he may come down the better.

The iron gate attained and locked, — but not before Durdles has tumbled twice, and cut an eyebrow open once, — they descend into the crypt again, with the intent of issuing forth, as they entered. But, while returning among those lanes of light, Durdles becomes so very uncertain, both of foot and speech, that he half drops, half throws himself down, by one of the heavy pillars, scarcely less heavy than itself, and indistinctly appeals to his companion for forty winks of a second each.

“If you will have it so, or must have it so,” replies Jasper, “I’ll not leave you here. Take them, while I walk to and fro.”

Durdles is asleep at once; and in his sleep he dreams a dream.

It is not much of a dream, considering the vast extent of the domains of dreamland, and their wonderful productions; it is only remarkable for being unusually restless, and unusually real. He dreams of lying there, asleep, and yet counting his companion’s footsteps as he walks to and fro. He dreams that the footsteps die away into distance of time and of space, and that something touches him, and that something falls from his hand.

Then something clinks and gropes about, and he dreams that he is alone for so long a time, that the lanes of light take new directions as the moon advances in her course. From succeeding unconsciousness, he passes into a dream of slow uneasiness from cold, and painfully awakes to a perception of the lanes of light, — really changed, much as he had dreamed, — and Jasper walking among them, beating his hands and feet.

"Holloa!" Durdles cries out, unmeaningly alarmed.

"Awake at last?" says Jasper, coming up to him. "Do you know that your forties have stretched into thousands?"

"No."

"They have though."

"What's the time?"

"Hark! The bells are going in the tower!"

They strike four quarters, and then the great bell strikes.

"Two!" cries Durdles, scrambling up; "why did n't you try to wake me, Mister Jarsper?"

"I did. I might as well have tried to wake the dead: — your own family of dead, up in the corner there."

"Did you touch me?"

"Touch you? Yes. Shook you."

As Durdles recalls that touching something in his dream, he looks down on the pavement, and sees the key of the crypt door lying close to where he himself lay.

"I dropped you, did I?" he says, picking it up, and recalling that part of his dream. As he gathers himself again into an upright position, or into a position as nearly upright as he ever maintains, he is again conscious of being watched by his companion.

"Well?" says Jasper, smiling. "Are you quite ready? Pray don't hurry."

"Let me get my bundle right, Mister Jarsper, and I'm with you."

As he ties it afresh, he is once more conscious that he is very narrowly observed.

"What do you suspect me of, Mister Jarsper?" he asks, with drunken displeasure. "Let them as has any suspicions of Durdles name 'em."

"I've no suspicions of you, my good Mr. Durdles;

but I have suspicions that my bottle was filled with something stiffer than either of us supposed. And I also have suspicions," Jasper adds, taking it from the pavement and turning it bottom upward, "that it's empty."

Durdles condescends to laugh at this. Continuing to chuckle when his laugh is over, as though remonstrant with himself on his drinking powers, he rolls to the door and unlocks it. They both pass out, and Durdles relocks it, and pockets his key.

"A thousand thanks for a curious and interesting night," says Jasper, giving him his hand; "you can make your own way home?"

"I should think so!" answers Durdles. "If you was to offer Durdles the affront to show him his way home, he would n't go home.

Durdles would n't go home till morning,
And *then* Durdles would n't go home,

Durdles would n't." This, with the utmost defiance.

"Good night, then."

"Good night, Mister Jarsper."

Each is turning his own way, when a sharp whistle rends the silence, and the jargon is yelped out:—

"Widdy widdy wen!
I—ket—ches—lm—out—ar—ter—ten.
Widdy widdy wy!
Then—E—don't—go—then—I—shy—
Widdy Widdy Wake-cock warning!"

Instantly afterwards, a rapid fire of stones rattles at the Cathedral wall, and the hideous small boy is beheld opposite, dancing in the moonlight.

"What! Is that baby-devil on the watch!" cries Jasper, in a fury, so quickly roused, and so violent, that he seems an older devil himself. "I shall shed the blood of that Impish wretch! I know I shall do it!" Regardless of the fire, though it hits him more than once, he rushes at Deputy, collars him, and tries to bring him across. But Deputy is not to be so easily brought across. With a diabolical insight into the strongest part of his position, he is no sooner taken by the throat than he curls up his legs, forces his assailant to hang him, as it were, and gurgles in his throat, and screws his body,

and twists, as already undergoing the first agonies of strangulation. There is nothing for it but to drop him. He instantly gets himself together, backs over to Durdles, and cries to his assailant, gnashing the great gap in front of his mouth with rage and malice:—

“I’ll blind yer, s’elp me! I’ll stone yer eyes out, s’elp me! If I don’t have yer eyesight, bellows me!” at the same time dodging behind Durdles, and snarling at Jasper, now from this side of him, and now from that: prepared, if pounced upon, to dart away in all manner of curvilinear directions, and, if run down after all, to grovel in the dust, and cry, “Now, hit me when I’m down! Do it!”

“Don’t hurt the boy, Mister Jarsper,” urges Durdles, shielding him. “Recollect yourself.”

“He followed us to-night, when we first came here!”

“Yer lie, I did n’t!” replies Deputy, in his one form of polite contradiction.

“He has been prowling near us ever since!”

“Yer lie, I haven’t!” returns Deputy. “I’d only jist come out for my ’elth when I see you two a coming out of the Kinfreederel. If

I — ket — ches — Im — out — ar — ter — ten”

(with the usual rhythm and dance, though dodging behind Durdles), “it ain’t *my* fault, is it?”

“Take him home, then,” retorts Jasper, ferociously, though with a strong check upon himself, “and let my eyes be rid of the sight of you!”

Deputy, with another sharp whistle, at once expressing his relief, and his commencement of a milder stoning of Mr. Durdles, begins stoning that respectable gentleman home, as if he were a reluctant ox. Mr. Jasper goes to his Gate House, brooding. And thus, as everything comes to an end, the unaccountable expedition comes to an end—for the time.

CHAPTER XIII.

BOTH AT THEIR BEST.

MISS TWINKLETON's establishment was about to undergo a serene hush. The Christmas recess was at hand. What had once, and at no remote period, been called, even by the erudite Miss Twinkleton herself, "the half," but what was now called, as being more elegant, and more strictly collegiate, "the term," would expire to-morrow. A noticeable relaxation of discipline had for some few days pervaded the Nuns' House. Club suppers had occurred in the bedrooms, and a dressed tongue had been carved with a pair of scissors, and handed round with the curling-tongs. Portions of marmalade had likewise been distributed on a service of plates constructed of curl-paper; and cowslip wine had been quaffed from the small squat measuring glass in which little Rickitts (a junior of weakly constitution) took her steel drops daily. The housemaids had been bribed with various fragments of riband, and sundry pairs of shoes, more or less down at heel, to make no mention of crumbs in the beds; the airiest costumes had been worn on these festive occasions; and the daring Miss Ferdinand had even surprised the company with a sprightly solo on the comb-and-curl-paper, until suffocated in her own pillow by two flowing-haired executioners.

Nor were these the only tokens of dispersal. Boxes appeared in the bedrooms (where they were capital at other times), and a surprising amount of packing took place, out of all proportion to the amount packed. Largess, in the form of odds and ends of cold cream and pomatum, and also of hairpins, was freely distributed among the attendants. On charges of inviolable secrecy, confidences were interchanged respecting golden youth of England expected to call, "at home," on the first op-

portunity. Miss Giggles (deficient in sentiment) did indeed profess that she, for her part, acknowledged such homage by making faces at the golden youth; but this young lady was outvoted by an immense majority.

On the last night before a recess, it was always expressly made a point of honor that nobody should go to sleep, and that Ghosts should be encouraged by all possible means. This compact invariably broke down, and all the young ladies went to sleep very soon, and got up very early.

The concluding ceremony came off at twelve o'clock on the day of departure; when Miss Twinkleton, supported by Mrs. Tisher, held a Drawing-Room in her own apartment (the globes already covered with brown holland), where glasses of white wine, and plates of cut pound-cake were discovered on the table. Miss Twinkleton then said, Ladies, another revolving year had brought us round to that festive period at which the first feelings of our nature bounded in our — Miss Twinkleton was annually going to add “bosoms,” but annually stopped on the brink of that expression, and substituted “hearts.” Hearts; our hearts. Hem! Again a revolving year, ladies, had brought us to a pause in our studies, — let us hope our greatly advanced studies, — and, like the mariner in his bark, the warrior in his tent, the captive in his dungeon, and the traveller in his various conveyances, we yearned for home. Did we say, on such an occasion, in the opening words of Mr. Addison's impressive tragedy, —

“The dawn is overcast, the morning lowers,
And heavily in clouds brings on the day,
The great, th' important day —”?

Not so. From horizon to zenith all was *couleur de rose*, for all was redolent of our relations and friends. Might *we* find *them* prospering as *we* expected; might *they* find *us* prospering as *they* expected! Ladies, we would now, with our love to one another, wish one another good by, and happiness, until we meet again. And when the time should come for our resumption of those pursuits which (here a general depression set in all round), pursuits which, pursuits which; — then let us ever remember what was said by the Spartan General, in words too trite

for repetition, at the battle it were superfluous to specify.

The handmaidens of the establishment, in their best caps, then handed the trays, and the young ladies sipped and crumbled, and the bespoken coaches began to choke the street. Then, leave-taking was not long about, and Miss Twinkleton, in saluting each young lady's cheek, confided to her an exceedingly neat letter, addressed to her next friend at law, "with Miss Twinkleton's best compliments" in the corner. This missive she handed with an air as if it had not the least connection with the bill, but were something in the nature of a delicate and joyful surprise.

So many times had Rosa seen such dispersals, and so very little did she know of any other Home, that she was contented to remain where she was, and was even better contented than ever before, having her latest friend with her. And yet her latest friendship had a blank place in it of which she could not fail to be sensible. Helena Landless, having been a party to her brother's revelation about Rosa, and having entered into that compact of silence with Mr. Crisparkle, shrank from any allusion to Edwin Drood's name. Why she so avoided it was mysterious to Rosa, but she perfectly perceived the fact. But for the fact, she might have relieved her own little perplexed heart of some of its doubts and hesitations, by taking Helena into her confidence. As it was, she had no such vent: she could only ponder on her own difficulties, and wonder more and more why this avoidance of Edwin's name should last, now that she knew — for so much Helena had told her — that a good understanding was to be re-established between the two young men when Edwin came down.

It would have made a pretty picture, so many pretty girls kissing Rosa in the cold porch of the Nuns' House, and that sunny little creature peeping out of it (unconscious of sly faces carved on spout and gable peeping at her), and waving farewells to the departing coaches, as if she represented the spirit of rosy youth abiding in the place to keep it bright and warm in its desertion. The hoarse High Street became musical with the cry, in various silvery voices, "Good by, Rosebud, Darling!"

and the effigy of Mr. Sapsea's father over the opposite doorway seemed to say to mankind, "Gentlemen, favor me with your attention to this charming little last lot left behind, and bid with a spirit worthy of the occasion!" Then the staid street, so unwontedly sparkling, youthful, and fresh for a few rippling moments, ran dry, and Cloisterham was itself again.

If Rosebud in her bower now waited Edwin Drood's coming with an uneasy heart, Edwin for his part was uneasy too. With far less force of purpose in his composition than the childish beauty, crowned by acclamation fairy queen of Miss Twinkleton's establishment, he had a conscience, and Mr. Grewgious had pricked it. That gentleman's steady convictions of what was right and what was wrong in such a case as his were neither to be frowned aside nor laughed aside. They would not be moved. But for the dinner in Staple Inn, and but for the ring he carried in the breast-pocket of his coat, he would have drifted into their wedding-day without another pause for real thought, loosely trusting that all would go well, left alone. But that serious putting him on his truth to the living and the dead had brought him to a check. He must either give the ring to Rosa, or he must take it back. Once put into this narrowed way of action, it was curious that he began to consider Rosa's claims upon him more unselfishly than he had ever considered them before, and began to be less sure of himself than he had ever been in all his easy-going days.

"I will be guided by what she says, and by how we get on," was his decision, walking from the Gate House to the Nuns' House. "Whatever comes of it, I will bear his words in mind, and try to be true to the living and the dead."

Rosa was dressed for walking. She expected him. It was a bright frosty day, and Miss Twinkleton had already graciously sanctioned fresh air. Thus they got out together before it became necessary for either Miss Twinkleton, or the Deputy High Priest, Mrs. Tisher, to lay even so much as one of those usual offerings on the shrine of Propriety.

"My dear Eddy," said Rosa, when they had turned out of the High Street, and had got among the quiet

walks in the neighborhood of the Cathedral and the river, "I want to say something very serious to you. I have been thinking about it for a long, long time."

"I want to be serious with you too, Rosa, dear. I mean to be serious and earnest."

"Thank you, Eddy. And you will not think me unkind because I begin, will you? You will not think I speak for myself only because I speak first? That would not be generous, would it? And I know you are generous!"

He said, "I hope I am not ungenerous to you, Rosa." He called her Pussy no more. Never again.

"And there is no fear," pursued Rosa, "of our quarrelling, is there? Because, Eddy," clasping her hand on his arm, "we have so much reason to be very lenient to each other!"

"We will be, Rosa."

"That's a dear good boy! Eddy, let us be courageous. Let us change to brother and sister from this day forth."

"Never be husband and wife?"

"Never!"

Neither spoke again for a little while. But after that pause he said, with some effort, —

"Of course I know that this has been in both our minds, Rosa, and of course I am in honor bound to confess freely that it does not originate with you."

"No, nor with you, dear," she returned, with pathetic earnestness. "It has sprung up between us. You are not truly happy in our engagement; I am not truly happy in it. O, I am so sorry, so sorry!" And there she broke into tears.

"I am deeply sorry too, Rosa. Deeply sorry for you."

"And I for you, poor boy! And I for you!"

This pure young feeling, this gentle and forbearing feeling of each towards the other, brought with it its reward in a softening light that seemed to shine on their position. The relations between them did not look wilful, or capricious, or a failure, in such a light: they became elevated into something more self-denying, honorable, affectionate, and true.

"If we knew yesterday," said Rosa, as she dried her eyes, "and we did know yesterday, and on many, many

yesterdays, that we were far from right together in those relations which were not of our own choosing, what better could we do to-day than change them? It is natural that we should be sorry, and you see how sorry we both are; but how much better to be sorry now than then!"

"When, Rosa?"

"When it would be too late. And then we should be angry, besides."

Another silence fell upon them.

"And you know," said Rosa, innocently, "you could n't like me then; and you can always like me now, for I shall not be a drag upon you, or a worry to you. And I can always like you now, and your sister will not tease or trifle with you. I often did when I was not your sister, and I beg your pardon for it."

"Don't let us come to that, Rosa; or I shall want more pardoning than I like to think of."

"No, indeed, Eddy; you are too hard, my generous boy, upon yourself. Let us sit down, brother, on these ruins, and let me tell you how it was with us. I think I know, for I have considered about it very much since you were here last time. You liked me, didn't you? You thought I was a nice little thing?"

"Everybody thinks that, Rosa."

"Do they?" She knitted her brow musingly for a moment, and then flashed out with the bright little induction: "Well; but say they do. Surely it was not enough that you should think of me only as other people did; now, was it?"

The point was not to be got over. It was not enough.

"And that is just what I mean; that is just how it was with us," said Rosa. "You liked me very well, and you had grown used to me, and had grown used to the idea of our being married. You accepted the situation as an inevitable kind of thing, didn't you? It was to be, you thought, and why discuss or dispute it?"

It was new and strange to him to have himself presented to himself so clearly, in a glass of her holding up. He had always patronized her, in his superiority to her share of woman's wit. Was that but another instance of something radically amiss in the terms on which they had been gliding towards a life-long bondage?



"All this that I say of you is true of me as well, Eddy. Unless it was, I might not be bold enough to say it. Only, the difference between us was, that by little and little there crept into my mind a habit of thinking about it, instead of dismissing it. My life is not so busy as yours, you see, and I have not so many things to think of. So I thought about it very much, and I cried about it very much too (though that was not your fault, poor boy); when all at once my guardian came down to prepare for my leaving the Nuns' House. I tried to hint to him that I was not quite settled in my mind, but I hesitated and failed, and he didn't understand me. But he is a good, good man. And he put before me so kindly, and yet so strongly, how seriously we ought to consider, in our circumstances, that I resolved to speak to you the next moment we were alone and grave. And if I seemed to come to it easily just now, because I came to it all at once, don't think it was so really, Eddy, for O, it was very, very hard, and O, I am very, very sorry!"

Her full heart broke into tears again. He put his arm about her waist, and they walked by the river-side together.

"Your guardian has spoken to me too, Rosa dear. I saw him before I left London." His right hand was in his breast, seeking the ring; but he checked it as he thought, "If I am to take it back, why should I tell her of it?"

"And that made you more serious about it, didn't it, Eddy? And if I had not spoken to you, as I have, you would have spoken to me? I hope you can tell me so? I don't like it to be *all* my doing, though it *is* so much better for us."

"Yes, I should have spoken; I should have put everything before you; I came intending to do it. But I never could have spoken to you as you have spoken to me, Rosa."

"Don't say you mean so coldly or unkindly, Eddy, please, if you can help it."

"I mean so sensibly and delicately, so wisely and affectionately."

"That's my dear brother!" She kissed his hand in

a little rapture. "The dear girls will be dreadfully disappointed," added Rosa, laughing, with the dew-drops glistening in her bright eyes. "They have looked forward to it so, poor pets!"

"Ah! But I fear it will be a worse disappointment to Jack," said Edwin Drood, with a start. "I never thought of Jack!"

Her swift and intent look at him as he said the words could no more be recalled than a flash of lightning can. But it appeared as though she would have instantly recalled it, if she could; for she looked down, confused, and breathed quickly.

"You don't doubt it's being a blow to Jack, Rosa?"

She merely replied, and that evasively and hurriedly, "Why should she? She had not thought about it. He seemed, to her, to have so little to do with it."

"My dear child! Can you suppose that any one so wrapped up in another — Mrs. Tope's expression: not mine — as Jack is in me, could fail to be struck all of a heap by such a sudden and complete change in my life? I say sudden, because it will be sudden to *him*, you know."

She nodded twice or thrice, and her lips parted as if she would have assented. But she uttered no sound, and her breathing was no slower.

"How shall I tell Jack!" said Edwin, ruminating. If he had been less occupied with the thought, he must have seen her singular emotion. "I never thought of Jack. It must be broken to him, before the town-crier knows it. I dine with the dear fellow to-morrow and next day, — Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, — but it would never do to spoil his feast days. He always worries about me, and molley-coddles in the merest trifles. The news is sure to upset him. How on earth shall this be broken to Jack!"

"He must be told, I suppose?" said Rosa.

"My dear Rosa! Who ought to be in our confidence, if not Jack?"

"My guardian promised to come down, if I should write and ask him. I am going to do so. Would you like to leave it to him?"

"A bright idea!" cried Edwin. "The other trustee. Nothing more natural. He comes down, he goes to Jack, he relates what we have agreed upon, and he states our case better than we could. He has already spoken feelingly to you, he has already spoken feelingly to me, and he'll put the whole thing feelingly to Jack. That's it! I am not a coward, Rosa, but to tell you a secret, I am a little afraid of Jack."

"No, no! You are not afraid of him?" cried Rosa, turning white and clasping her hands.

"Why, Sister Rosa, Sister Rosa, what do you see from the turret?" said Edwin, rallying her. "My dear girl!"

"You frightened me."

"Most unintentionally, but I am as sorry as if I had meant to do it. Could you possibly suppose for a moment, from any loose way of speaking of mine, that I was literally afraid of the dear fond fellow? What I mean is, that he is subject to a kind of paroxysm, or fit, — I saw him in it once, — and I don't know but that so great a surprise, coming upon him direct from me, whom he is so wrapped up in, might bring it on perhaps. Which — and this is the secret I was going to tell you — is another reason for your guardian's making the communication. He is so steady, precise, and exact, that he will talk Jack's thoughts into shape in no time; whereas with me Jack is always impulsive and hurried, and, I may say, almost womanish."

Rosa seemed convinced. Perhaps from her own very different point of view of "Jack," she felt comforted and protected by the interposition of Mr. Grewgious between herself and him.

And now, Edwin Drood's right hand closed again upon the ring in its little case, and again was checked by the consideration: "It is certain, now, that I am to give it back to him, then why should I tell her of it?" That pretty sympathetic nature which could be so sorry for him in the blight of their childish hopes of happiness together, and could so quietly find itself alone in a new world to weave fresh wreaths of such flowers as it might prove to bear, the old world's flowers being withered, would be grieved by those sorrowful jewels; and to what

purpose? Why should it be? They were but a sign of broken joys and baseless projects; in their very beauty, they were (as the unlikeliest of men had said) almost a cruel satire on the loves, hopes, plans, of humanity, which are able to forecast nothing, and are so much brittle dust. Let them be. He would restore them to her guardian when he came down; he in his turn would restore them to the cabinet from which he had unwillingly taken them; and there, like old letters or old vows, or records of old aspirations come to nothing, they would be disregarded, until, being valuable, they were sold into circulation again, to repeat their former round.

Let them be. Let them lie unspoken of, in his breast. However distinctly or indistinctly he entertained these thoughts, he arrived at the conclusion, Let them be. Among the mighty store of wonderful chains that are forever forging, day and night, in the vast iron-works of time and circumstance, there was one chain forged in the moment of that small conclusion, riveted to the foundations of heaven and earth, and gifted with invincible force to hold and drag.

They walked on by the river. They began to speak of their separate plans. He would quicken his departure from England, and she would remain where she was, at least as long as Helena remained. The poor dear girls should have their disappointment broken to them gently, and, as the first preliminary, Miss Twinkleton should be confided in by Rosa, even in advance of the reappearance of Mr. Grewgious. It should be made clear in all quarters that she and Edwin were the best of friends. There had never been so serene an understanding between them since they were first affianced. And yet there was one reservation on each side: on hers, that she intended through her guardian to withdraw herself immediately from the tuition of her music-master; on his, that he did already entertain some wandering speculations whether it might ever come to pass that he would know more of Miss Landless.

The bright frosty day declined as they walked and spoke together. The sun dipped in the river far behind them, and the old city lay red before them, as their walk

drew to a close. The moaning water cast its sea-weed duskily at their feet, when they turned to leave its margin; and the rooks hovered above them with hoarse cries, darker splashes in the darkening air.

"I will prepare Jack for my flitting soon," said Edwin, in a low voice, "and I will but see your guardian when he comes, and then go before they speak together. It will be better done without my being by. Don't you think so?"

"Yes."

"We know we have done right, Rosa?"

"Yes."

"We know we are better so, even now?"

"And shall be far, far better so by and by."

Still, there was that lingering tenderness in their hearts towards the old positions they were relinquishing, that they prolonged their parting. When they came among the elm-trees by the Cathedral, where they had last sat together, they stopped, as by consent, and Rosa raised her face to his, as she had never raised it in the old days, — for they were old already.

"God bless you, dear! Good by!"

"God bless you, dear! Good by!"

They kissed each other, fervently.

"Now, please take me home, Eddy, and let me be by myself."

"Don't look round, Rosa," he cautioned her, as he drew her arm through his, and led her away. "Didn't you see Jack?"

"No! Where?"

"Under the trees. He saw us, as we took leave of each other. Poor fellow! he little thinks we have parted. This will be a blow to him, I am much afraid!"

She hurried on, without resting, and hurried on until they had passed under the Gate House into the street; once there, she asked, —

"Has he followed us? You can look without seeming to. Is he behind?"

"No. Yes! he is! He has just passed out under the gateway. The dear sympathetic old fellow likes to keep us in sight. I am afraid he will be bitterly disappointed!"

She pulled hurriedly at the pendent handle of the hoarse old bell, and the gate soon opened. Before going in, she gave him one last wide wondering look, as if she would have asked him with imploring emphasis, "Oh! don't you understand?" And out of that look he vanished from her view.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN SHALL THESE THREE MEET AGAIN?

CHRISTMAS Eve in Cloisterham. A few strange faces in the streets; a few other faces, half strange and half familiar, once the faces of Cloisterham children, now the faces of men and women who come back from the outer world at long intervals to find the city wonderfully shrunken in size, as if it had not washed by any means well in the mean while. To these, the striking of the Cathedral clock, and the cawing of the rooks from the Cathedral tower, are like voices of their nursery time. To such as these, it has happened in their dying hours afar off, that they have imagined their chamber floor to be strewn with the autumnal leaves fallen from the elm-trees in the Close; so have the rustling sounds and fresh scents of their earliest impressions revived, when the circle of their lives was very nearly traced, and the beginning and the end were drawing close together.

Seasonable tokens are about. Red berries shine here and there in the lattices of Minor Canon Corner; Mr. and Mrs. Tope are daintily sticking sprigs of holly into the carvings and sconces of the Cathedral stalls, as if they were sticking them into the coat-buttonholes of the Dean and Chapter. Lavish profusion is in the shops; particularly in the articles of currants, raisins, spices, candied peel, and moist sugar. An unusual air of gallantry and dissipation is abroad; evinced in an immense bunch of mistletoe hanging in the green-grocer's shop doorway, and a poor little Twelfth Cake, culminating in the figure of a Harlequin, — such a very poor little Twelfth Cake, that one would rather call it a Twenty-Fourth Cake, or a Forty-Eighth Cake, — to be raffled for at the pastry-cook's, terms one shilling per member. Public amusements are not wanting. The Wax-Work which made so

deep an impression on the reflective mind of the Emperor of China is to be seen by particular desire during Christmas Week only; on the premises of the bankrupt livery-stable keeper up the lane; and a new grand comic Christmas pantomime is to be produced at the Theatre; the latter heralded by the portrait of Signor Jacksonini the clown, saying "How do you do to-morrow," quite as large as life, and almost as miserably. In short, Cloisterham is up and doing; though from this description the High School and Miss Twinkleton's are to be excluded. From the former establishment the scholars have gone home, every one of them in love with one of Miss Twinkleton's young ladies (who knows nothing about it); and only the handmaidens flutter occasionally in the windows of the latter. It is noticed, by the by, that these damsels become, within the limits of decorum, more skittish when thus intrusted with the concrete representation of their sex, than when dividing the representation with Miss Twinkleton's young ladies.

Three are to meet at the Gate House to-night. How does each one of the three get through the day?

Neville Landless, though absolved from his books for the time by Mr. Crisparkle, — whose fresh nature is by no means insensible to the charms of a holiday, — reads and writes in his quiet room, with a concentrated air, until it is two hours past noon. He then sets himself to clearing his table, to arranging his books, and to tearing up and burning his stray papers. He makes a clean sweep of all untidy accumulations, puts all his drawers in order, and leaves no note or scrap of paper undestroyed, save such memoranda as bear directly on his studies. This done, he turns to his wardrobe, selects a few articles of ordinary wear, — among them, change of stout shoes and socks for walking, — and packs these in a knapsack. This knapsack is new, and he bought it in the High Street yesterday. He also purchased, at the same time and at the same place, a heavy walking-stick: strong in the handle for the grip of the hand, and iron-shod. He tries this, swings it, poises it, and lays it by, with the knapsack, on a window-seat. By this time his arrangements are complete.

He dresses for going out, and is in the act of going — indeed, has left his room, and has met the Minor Canon on the staircase, coming out of his bedroom upon the same story — when he turns back again for his walking-stick, thinking he will carry it now. Mr. Crisparkle, who has paused on the staircase, sees it in his hand on his immediately reappearing, takes it from him, and asks him with a smile how he chooses a stick.

“Really I don’t know that I understand the subject,” he answers. “I chose it for its weight.”

“Much too heavy, Neville; *much* too heavy.”

“To rest upon in a long walk, sir?”

“Rest upon?” repeats Mr. Crisparkle, throwing himself into pedestrian form. “You don’t rest upon it; you merely balance with it.”

“I shall know better, with practice, sir. I have not lived in a walking country, you know.”

“True,” says Mr. Crisparkle. “Get into a little training, and we will have a few score miles together. I should leave you nowhere now. Do you come back before dinner?”

“I think not, as we dine early.”

Mr. Crisparkle gives him a bright nod and a cheerful good by, expressing (not without intention) absolute confidence and ease.

Neville repairs to the Nuns’ House, and requests that Miss Landless may be informed that her brother is there, by appointment. He waits at the gate, not even crossing the threshold; for he is on his parole not to put himself in Rosa’s way.

His sister is at least as mindful of the obligation they have taken on themselves, as he can be, and loses not a moment in joining him. They meet affectionately, avoid lingering there, and walk towards the upper inland country.

“I am not going to tread upon forbidden ground, Helena,” says Neville, when they have walked some distance and are turning; “you will understand in another moment that I cannot help referring to — what shall I say — my infatuation.”

“Had you not better avoid it, Neville? You know that I can hear nothing.”

"You can hear, my dear, what Mr. Crisparkle has heard, and heard with approval."

"Yes ; I can hear so much."

"Well, it is this. I am not only unsettled and unhappy myself, but I am conscious of unsettling and interfering with other people. How do I know that, but for my unfortunate presence, you, and — and — the rest of that former party, our engaging guardian excepted, might be dining cheerfully in Minor Canon Corner to-morrow ? Indeed it probably would be so. I can see too well that I am not high in the old lady's opinion, and it is easy to understand what an irksome clog I must be upon the hospitalities of her orderly house, — especially at this time of year, — when I must be kept asunder from this person, and there is such a reason for my not being brought into contact with that person, and an unfavorable reputation has preceded me with such another person, and so on. I have put this very gently to Mr. Crisparkle, for you know his self-denying ways ; but still I have put it. What I have laid much greater stress upon at the same time, is, that I am engaged in a miserable struggle with myself, and that a little change and absence may enable me to come through it the better. So, the weather being bright and hard, I am going on a walking expedition, and intend taking myself out of everybody's way (my own included, I hope) to-morrow morning."

"When to come back ?"

"In a fortnight."

"And going quite alone ?"

"I am much better without company, even if there were any one but you to bear me company, my dear Helena."

"Mr. Crisparkle entirely agrees, you say ?"

"Entirely. I am not sure but that at first he was inclined to think it rather a moody scheme, and one that might do a brooding mind harm. But we took a moonlight walk, last Monday night, to talk it over at leisure, and I represented the case to him as it really is. I showed him that I do want to conquer myself, and that, this evening well got over, it is surely better that I should be away from here just now than here. I could

hardly help meeting certain people walking together here, and that could do no good, and is certainly not the way to forget. A fortnight hence, that chance will probably be over, for the time ; and when it again arises for the last time, why, I can again go away. Further, I really do feel hopeful of bracing exercise and wholesome fatigue. You know that Mr. Crisparkle allows such things their full weight in the preservation of his own sound mind in his own sound body, and that his just spirit is not likely to maintain one set of natural laws for himself and another for me. He yielded to my view of the matter, when convinced that I was honestly in earnest, and so, with his full consent, I start to-morrow morning. Early enough to be not only out of the streets, but out of hearing of the bells, when the good people go to church."

Helena thinks it over, and thinks well of it. Mr. Crisparkle doing so, she would do so ; but she does originally, out of her own mind, think well of it, as a healthy project, denoting a sincere endeavor, and an active attempt, at self-correction. She is inclined to pity him, poor fellow, for going away solitary on the great Christmas festival ; but she feels it much more to the purpose to encourage him. And she does encourage him.

He will write to her ?

He will write to her every alternate day, and tell her all his adventures.

Does he send clothes on, in advance of him ?

" My dear Helena, no. Travel like a pilgrim, with wallet and staff. My wallet — or my knapsack — is packed, and ready for strapping on ; and here is my staff ! "

He hands it to her ; she makes the same remark as Mr. Crisparkle, that it is very heavy ; and gives it back to him, asking what wood it is ? Iron-wood.

Up to this point he has been extremely cheerful. Perhaps the having to carry his case with her, and therefore to present it in its brightest aspect, has roused his spirits. Perhaps the having done so with success is followed by a revulsion. As the day closes in, and the city lights begin to spring up before them, he grows depressed.

" I wish I were not going to this dinner, Helena."

"Dear Neville, is it worth while to care much about it? Think how soon it will be over."

"How soon it will be over," he repeats, gloomily. "Yes. But I don't like it."

There may be a moment's awkwardness, she cheerfully represents to him, but it can only last a moment. He is quite sure of himself.

"I wish I felt as sure of everything else as I feel of myself," he answers her.

"How strangely you speak, dear! What do you mean?"

"Helena, I don't know. I only know that I don't like it. What a strange dead weight there is in the air!"

She calls his attention to those copperous clouds beyond the river, and says that the wind is rising. He scarcely speaks again, until he takes leave of her, at the gate of the Nuns' House. She does not immediately enter when they have parted, but remains looking after him along the street. Twice he passes the Gate House, reluctant to enter. At length, the Cathedral clock chiming one quarter, with a rapid turn he hurries in.

And so *he* goes up the postern stair.

Edwin Drood passes a solitary day. Something of deeper moment than he had thought has gone out of his life; and in the silence of his own chamber he wept for it last night. Though the image of Miss Landless still hovers in the background of his mind, the pretty little affectionate creature, so much firmer and wiser than he had supposed, occupies its stronghold. It is with some misgiving of his own unworthiness that he thinks of her, and of what they might have been to one another, if he had been more in earnest some time ago; if he had set a higher value on her; if, instead of accepting his fortune in life as an inheritance of course, he had studied the right way to its appreciation and enhancement. And still, for all this, and though there is a sharp heartache in all this, the vanity and caprice of youth sustain that handsome figure of Miss Landless in the background of his mind.

That was a curious look of Rosa's when they parted at the gate. Did it mean that she saw below the surface

of his thoughts, and down into their twilight depths? Scarcely that, for it was a look of astonished and keen inquiry. He decides that he cannot understand it, though it was remarkably expressive.

As he only waits for Mr. Grewgious now, and will depart immediately after having seen him, he takes a sauntering leave of the ancient city and its neighborhood. He recalls the time when Rosa and he walked here or there, mere children, full of the dignity of being engaged. Poor children! he thinks, with a pitying sadness.

Finding that his watch has stopped, he turns into the jeweller's shop, to have it wound and set. The jeweller is knowing on the subject of a bracelet, which he begs leave to submit, in a general and quite aimless way. It would suit (he considers) a young bride to perfection; especially if of a rather diminutive style of beauty. Finding the bracelet but coldly looked at, the jeweller invites attention to a tray of rings for gentlemen; here is a style of ring now, he remarks; a very chaste signet; which gentlemen are much given to purchasing, when changing their condition. A ring of a very responsible appearance. With the date of their wedding-day engraved inside, several gentlemen have preferred it to any other kind of memento.

The rings are as coldly viewed as the bracelet. Edwin tells the tempter that he wears no jewelery but his watch and chain, which were his father's, and his shirt-pin.

"That I was aware of," is the jeweller's reply, "for Mr. Jasper dropped in for a watch-glass the other day, and, in fact, I showed these articles to him, remarking that if he *should* wish to make a present to a gentleman relative, on any particular occasion — But he said with a smile that he had an inventory in his mind of all the jewelry his gentleman relative ever wore; namely, his watch and chain and his shirt-pin." Still (the jeweller considers) that might not apply to all times, though applying to the present time. "Twenty minutes past two, Mr. Drood, I set your watch at. Let me recommend you not to let it run down, sir."

Edwin takes his watch, puts it on, and goes out, thinking, "Dear old Jack! If I were to make an extra crease in my neckcloth, he would think it worth noticing!"

He strolls about and about, to pass the time until the dinner hour. It somehow happens that Cloisterham seems reproachful to him to-day : has fault to find with him, as if he had not used it well ; but is far more pensive with him than angry. His wonted carelessness is replaced by a wistful looking at, and dwelling upon, all the old landmarks. He will soon be far away, and may never see them again, he thinks. Poor youth ! Poor youth !

As dusk draws on, he paces the Monks' Vineyard. He has walked to and fro, full half an hour by the Cathedral chimes, and it has closed in dark, before he becomes quite aware of a woman crouching on the ground near a wicket gate in a corner. The gate commands a cross by-path, little used in the gloaming ; and the figure must have been there all the time, though he has but gradually and lately made it out.

He strikes into that path, and walks up to the wicket. By the light of a lamp near it, he sees that the woman is of a haggard appearance, and that her weazen chin is resting on her hands, and that her eyes are staring — with an unwinking, blind sort of steadfastness — before her.

Always kindly, but moved to be unusually kind this evening, and having bestowed kind words on most of the children and aged people he has met, he at once bends down, and speaks to this woman.

“ Are you ill ? ”

“ No, deary,” she answers, without looking at him, and with no departure from her strange blind stare.

“ Are you blind ? ”

“ No, deary.”

“ Are you lost, homeless, faint ? What is the matter, that you stay here in the cold so long, without moving ? ”

By slow and stiff efforts, she appears to contract her vision until it can rest upon him ; and then a curious film passes over her, and she begins to shake.

He straightens himself, recoils a step, and looks down at her in a dread amazement ; for he seems to know her.

“ Good Heaven ! ” he thinks, next moment. “ Like Jack that night ! ”

As he looks down at her, she looks up at him and whim-

pers, "My lungs is weakly; my lungs is dreffle bad. Poor me, poor me, my cough is rattling dry!" And coughs in confirmation horribly.

"Where do you come from?"

"Come from London, deary." (Her cough still rending her.)

"Where are you going to?"

"Back to London, deary. I came here, looking for a needle in a haystack, and I ain't found it. Look 'ee, deary; give me three and sixpence, and don't you be afeard for me. I'll get back to London then, and trouble no one. I'm in a business. Ah me! It's slack, it's slack, and times is very bad!—but I can make a shift to live by it."

"Do you eat opium?"

"Smokes it," she replies with difficulty, still racked by her cough. "Give me three and sixpence, and I'll lay it out well, and get back. If you don't give me three and sixpence, don't give me a brass farden. And if you do give me three and sixpence, deary, I'll tell you something."

He counts the money from his pocket, and puts it in her hand. She instantly clutches it tight, and rises to her feet with a croaking laugh of satisfaction.

"Bless ye! Harkee, dear genl'mn. What's your Chris'en name?"

"Edwin."

"Edwin, Edwin, Edwin," she repeats, trailing off into a drowsy repetition of the word, and then asks suddenly, "Is the short of that name, Eddy?"

"It is sometimes called so," he replies, with the color starting to his face.

"Don't sweethearts call it so?" she asks, pondering.

"How should I know?"

"Have n't you a sweetheart, upon your soul?"

"None."

She is moving away with another "Bless ye, and thank 'ee, deary!" when he adds, "You were to tell me something; you may as well do so."

"So I was, so I was. Well, then. Whisper. You be thankful that your name ain't Ned."

He looks at her, quite steadily, as he asks, "Why?"

"Because it's a bad name to have just now."

"How a bad name?"

"A threatened name. A dangerous name."

"The proverb says that threatened men live long," he tells her, lightly.

"Then Ned — so threatened is he, wherever he may be while I am a talking to you, deary — should live to all eternity!" replies the woman.

She has leaned forward, to say it in his ear, with her forefinger shaking before his eyes, and now huddles herself together, and with another "Bless ye, and thank 'ee!" goes away in the direction of the Travellers' Lodging House.

This is not an inspiring close to a dull day. Alone, in a sequestered place, surrounded by vestiges of old time and decay, it rather has a tendency to call a shudder into being. He makes for the better lighted streets, and resolves as he walks on to say nothing of this to-night, but to mention it to Jack (who alone calls him Ned), as an odd coincidence, to-morrow; of course only as a coincidence, and not as anything better worth remembering.

Still, it holds to him, as many things much better worth remembering never did. He has another mile or so to linger out before the dinner-hour; and, when he walks over the bridge and by the river, the woman's words are in the rising wind, in the angry sky, in the troubled water, in the flickering lights. There is some solemn echo of them, even in the Cathedral chime, which strikes a sudden surprise to his heart as he turns in under the archway of the Gate House.

And so *he* goes up the postern stair.

John Jasper passes a more agreeable and cheerful day than either of his guests. Having no music-lessons to give in the holiday season, his time is his own, but for the Cathedral services. He is early among the shop-keepers, ordering little table luxuries that his nephew likes. His nephew will not be with him long, he tells his provision-dealers, and so must be petted and made much of. While out on his hospitable preparations, he looks in on Mr. Sapsea, and mentions that dear Ned, and

that inflammable young spark of Mr. Crisparkle's, are to dine at the Gate House to-day, and make up their difference. Mr. Sapsea is by no means friendly towards the inflammable young spark. He says that his complexion is "Un-English." And when Mr. Sapsea has once declared anything to be Un-English, he considers that thing everlastingly sunk in the bottomless pit.

John Jasper is truly sorry to hear Mr. Sapsea speak thus, for he knows right well that Mr. Sapsea never speaks without a meaning, and that he has a subtle trick of being right. Mr. Sapsea (by a very remarkable coincidence) is of exactly that opinion.

Mr. Jasper is in beautiful voice this day. In the pathetic supplication to have his heart inclined to keep this law, he quite astonishes his fellows by his melodious power. He has never sung difficult music with such skill and harmony as in this day's Anthem. His nervous temperament is occasionally prone to take difficult music a little too quickly; to-day, his time is perfect.

These results are probably attained through a grand composure of the spirits. The mere mechanism of his throat is a little tender, for he wears, both with his singing-robe and with his ordinary dress, a large black scarf of strong close-woven silk, slung loosely round his neck. But his composure is so noticeable, that Mr. Crisparkle speaks of it, as they come out from Vespers.

"I must thank you, Jasper, for the pleasure with which I have heard you to-day. Beautiful! Delightful! You could not have so outdone yourself, I hope, without being wonderfully well."

"I *am* wonderfully well."

"Nothing unequal," says the Minor Canon, with a smooth motion of his hand: "nothing unsteady, nothing forced, nothing avoided; all thoroughly done in a masterly manner, with perfect self-command."

"Thank you. I hope so, if it is not too much to say."

"One would think, Jasper, you had been trying a new medicine for that occasional indisposition of yours."

"No, really? That's well observed; for I have."

"Then stick to it, my good fellow," says Mr. Crisparkle, clapping him on the shoulder with friendly encouragement, — "stick to it."

"I will."

"I congratulate you," Mr. Crisparkle pursues, as they come out of the Cathedral, "on all accounts."

"Thank you again. I will walk round to the Corner with you, if you don't object; I have plenty of time before my company come; and I want to say a word to you, which I think you will not be displeased to hear."

"What is it?"

"Well. We were speaking, the other evening, of my black humors."

Mr. Crisparkle's face falls, and he shakes his head despairingly.

"I said, you know, that I should make you an antidote to those black humors; and you said you hoped I would consign them to the flames."

"And I still hope so, Jasper."

"With the best reason in the world! I mean to burn this year's Diary at the year's end."

"Because you —?" Mr. Crisparkle brightens greatly as he thus begins.

"You anticipate me. Because I feel that I have been out of sorts, gloomy, bilious, brain-oppressed, whatever it may be. You said I had been exaggerative. So I have."

Mr. Crisparkle's brightened face brightens still more.

"I couldn't see it then, because I *was* out of sorts; but I am in a healthier state now, and I acknowledge it with genuine pleasure. I made a great deal of a very little; that's the fact."

"It does me good," cries Mr. Crisparkle, "to hear you say it!"

"A man leading a monotonous life," Jasper proceeds, "and getting his nerves, or his stomach, out of order, dwells upon an idea until it loses its proportions. That was my case with the idea in question. So I shall burn the evidence of my case, when the book is full, and begin the next volume with a clearer vision."

"This is better," says Mr. Crisparkle, stopping at the steps of his own door to shake hands, "than I could have hoped!"

"Why, naturally," returns Jasper. "You had but little reason to hope that I should become more like your-

self. You are always training yourself to be, mind and body, as clear as crystal, and you always are, and never change ; whereas, I am a muddy, solitary, moping weed. However, I have got over that mope. Shall I wait, while you ask if Mr. Neville has left for my place ? If not, he and I may walk round together."

"I think," says Mr. Crisparkle, opening the entrance door with his key, "that he left some time ago ; at least I know he left, and I think he has not come back. But I'll inquire. You won't come in ?"

"My company wait," says Jasper, with a smile.

The Minor Canon disappears, and in a few moments returns. As he thought, Mr. Neville has not come back ; indeed, as he remembers now, Mr. Neville said he would probably go straight to the Gate House.

"Bad manners in a host !" says Jasper. "My company will be there before me ! What will you bet that I don't find my company embracing ?"

"I will bet — or I would, if I ever did bet," returns Mr. Crisparkle, "that your company will have a gay entertainer this evening."

Jasper nods, and laughs Good Night !

He retraces his steps to the Cathedral door, and turns down past it to the Gate House. He sings, in a low voice and with delicate expression, as he walks along. It still seems as if a false note were not within his power to-night, and as if nothing could hurry or retard him. Arriving thus, under the arched entrance of his dwelling, he pauses for an instant in the shelter to pull off that great black scarf, and hang it in a loop upon his arm. For that brief time, his face is knitted and stern. But it immediately clears, as he resumes his singing, and his way.

And so *he* goes up the postern stair.

The red light burns steadily all the evening in the lighthouse on the margin of the tide of busy life. Softened sounds and hum of traffic pass it and flow on irregularly into the lonely Precincts ; but very little else goes by, save violent rushes of wind. It comes on to blow a boisterous gale.

The Precincts are never particularly well lighted ; but

the strong blasts of wind blowing out many of the lamps (in some instances shattering the frames too, and bringing the glass rattling to the ground), they are unusually dark to-night. The darkness is augmented and confused by flying dust from the earth, dry twigs from the trees, and great ragged fragments from the rooks' nests up in the tower. The trees themselves so toss and creak, as this tangible part of the darkness madly whirls about, that they seem in peril of being torn out of the earth; while ever and again a crack, and a rushing fall, denote that some large branch has yielded to the storm.

No such power of wind has blown for many a winter night. Chimneys topple in the streets, and people hold to posts and corners, and to one another, to keep themselves upon their feet. The violent rushes abate not, but increase in frequency and fury until at midnight, when the streets are empty, the storm goes thundering along them, rattling at all the latches, and tearing at all the shutters, as if warning the people to get up and fly with it, rather than have the roofs brought down upon their brains.

Still the red light burns steadily. Nothing is steady but the red light.

All through the night the wind blows, and abates not. But early in the morning, when there is barely enough light in the east to dim the stars, it begins to lull. From that time, with occasional wild charges, like a wounded monster dying, it drops and sinks; and at full daylight it is dead.

It is then seen that the hands of the Cathedral clock are torn off; that lead from the roof has been stripped away, rolled up, and blown into the Close; and that some stones have been displaced upon the summit of the great tower. Christmas morning though it be, it is necessary to send up workmen, to ascertain the extent of the damage done. These, led by Durdles, go aloft; while Mr. Tope and a crowd of early idlers gather down in Minor Canon Corner, shading their eyes and watching for their appearance up there.

This cluster is suddenly broken and put aside by the hands of Mr. Jasper; all the gazing eyes are brought down to the earth by his loudly inquiring of Mr. Crisparkle, at an open window, —

“Where is my nephew?”

“He has not been here. Is he not with you?”

“No. He went down to the river last night, with Mr. Neville, to look at the storm, and has not been back. Call Mr. Neville!”

“He left this morning, early.”

“Left this morning, early? Let me in, let me in!”

There is no more looking up at the tower, now. All the assembled eyes are turned on Mr. Jasper, white, half dressed, panting, and clinging to the rail before the Minor Canon's house.

CHAPTER XV.

IMPEACHED.

NEVILLE LANDLESS had started so early and walked at so good a pace, that when the church bells began to ring in Cloisterham for morning service, he was eight miles away. As he wanted his breakfast by that time, having set forth on a crust of bread, he stopped at the next roadside tavern to refresh.

Visitors in want of breakfast — unless they were horses or cattle, for which class of guests there was preparation enough in the way of water-trough and hay — were so unusual at the sign of The Tilted Wagon, that it took a long time to get the wagon into the track of tea and toast and bacon, Neville, in the interval, sitting in a sanded parlor, wondering in how long a time after he had gone, the sneezy fire of damp fagots would begin to make somebody else warm.

Indeed, The Tilted Wagon, as a cool establishment on the top of a hill, where the ground before the door was puddled with damp hoofs and trodden straw; where a scolding landlady slapped a moist baby (with one red sock on and one wanting) in the bar; where the cheese was cast aground upon a shelf, in company with a mouldy tablecloth and a green-handled knife, in a sort of cast-iron canoe; where the pale-faced bread shed tears of crumb over its shipwreck in another canoe; where the family linen, half washed and half dried, led a public life of lying about; where everything to drink was drunk out of mugs, and everything else was suggestive of a rhyme to mugs, — The Tilted Wagon, all these things considered, hardly kept its painted promise of providing good entertainment for Man and Beast. However, Man, in the present case, was not critical, but took what entertainment he could get, and went on again after a longer rest than he needed.

He stopped at some quarter of a mile from the house, hesitating whether to pursue the road, or to follow a cart-track between two high hedgerows, which led across the slope of a breezy heath, and evidently struck into the road again by and by. He decided in favor of this latter track, and pursued it with some toil; the rise being steep, and the way worn into deep ruts.

He was laboring along, when he became aware of some other pedestrians behind him. As they were coming up at a faster pace than his, he stood aside, against one of the high banks, to let them pass. But their manner was very curious. Only four of them passed. Other four slackened speed, and loitered as intending to follow him when he should go on. The remainder of the party (half a dozen perhaps) turned, and went back at a great rate.

He looked at the four behind him, and he looked at the four before him. They all returned his look. He resumed his way. The four in advance went on, constantly looking back; the four in the rear came closing up.

When they all ranged out from the narrow track upon the open slope of the heath, and this order was maintained, let him diverge as he would to either side, there was no longer room to doubt that he was beset by these fellows. He stopped, as a last test; and they all stopped.

"Why do you attend upon me in this way?" he asked the whole body. "Are you a pack of thieves?"

"Don't answer him," said one of the number; he did not see which. "Better be quiet."

"Better be quiet?" repeated Neville. "Who said so?"

Nobody replied.

"It's good advice, whichever of you skulkers gave it," he went on angrily. "I will not submit to be penned in between four men there, and four men there. I wish to pass, and I mean to pass, those four in front."

They were all standing still, himself included.

"If eight men, or four men, or two men, set upon one," he proceeded, growing more enraged, "the one has no chance but to set his mark upon some of them. And by the Lord I'll do it, if I am interrupted any further!"

Shouldering his heavy stick, and quickening his pace,

he shot on to pass the four ahead. The largest and strongest man of the number changed swiftly to the side on which he came up, and dexterously closed with him and went down with him; but not before the heavy stick had descended smartly.

"Let him be!" said this man in a suppressed voice, as they struggled together on the grass. "Fair play! His is the build of a girl to mine, and he's got a weight strapped to his back besides. Let him alone. I'll manage him."

After a little rolling about, in a close scuffle, which caused the faces of both to be besmeared with blood, the man took his knee from Neville's chest, and rose, saying, "There! Now take him arm in arm, any two of you!"

It was immediately done.

"As to our being a pack of thieves, Mr. Landless," said the man, as he spat out some blood, and wiped more from his face, "you know better than that, at midday. We would n't have touched you, if you had n't forced us. We're going to take you round to the high-road, anyhow, and you'll find help enough against thieves there, if you want it. Wipe his face, somebody; see how it is a trickling down him!"

When his face was cleansed, Neville recognized in the speaker, Joe, driver of the Cloisterham omnibus, whom he had seen but once, and that on the day of his arrival.

"And what I recommend you for the present, is, don't talk, Mr. Landless. You'll find a friend waiting for you, at the high-road, — gone ahead by the other way when we split into two parties, — and you had much better say nothing till you come up with him. Bring that stick along, somebody else, and let's be moving!"

Utterly bewildered, Neville stared around him and said not a word. Walking between his two conductors, who held his arms in theirs, he went on, as in a dream, until they came again into the high-road, and into the midst of a little group of people. The men who had turned back were among the group, and its central figures were Mr. Jasper and Mr. Crisparkle. Neville's conductors took him up to the Minor Canon, and there released him, as an act of deference to that gentleman.

"What is all this, sir? What is the matter? I feel

as if I had lost my senses !” cried Neville, the group closing in around him.

“Where is my nephew ?” asked Mr. Jasper, wildly.

“Where is your nephew ?” repeated Neville. “Why do you ask me ?”

“I ask you,” retorted Jasper, “because you were the last person in his company, and he is not to be found.”

“Not to be found !” cried Neville, aghast.

“Stay, stay,” said Mr. Crisparkle. “Permit me, Jasper. Mr. Neville, you are confounded ; collect your thoughts ; it is of great importance that you should collect your thoughts ; attend to me.”

“I will try, sir, but I seem mad”

“You left Mr. Jasper’s last night, with Edwin Drood ?”

“Yes.”

“At what hour ?”

“Was it at twelve o’clock ?” asked Neville, with his hand to his confused head, and appealing to Jasper.

“Quite right,” said Mr. Crisparkle ; “the hour Mr. Jasper has already named to me. You went down to the river together ?”

“Undoubtedly. To see the action of the wind there.”

“What followed ? How long did you stay there ?”

“About ten minutes ; I should say not more. We then walked together to your house, and he took leave of me at the door.”

“Did he say that he was going down to the river again ?”

“No. He said that he was going straight back”

The bystanders looked at one another, and at Mr. Crisparkle. To whom Mr. Jasper, who had been intensely watching Neville, said, in a low, distinct, suspicious voice, “What are those stains upon his dress ?”

All eyes were turned towards the blood upon his clothes.

“And here are the same stains upon this stick !” said Jasper, taking it from the hand of the man who held it. “I know the stick to be his, and he carried it last night. What does this mean ?”

“In the name of God, say what it means, Neville !” urged Mr. Crisparkle.

“That man and I,” said Neville, pointing out his late

adversary, "had a struggle for the stick just now, and you may see the same marks on him, sir. What was I to suppose, when I found myself molested by eight people? Could I dream of the true reason when they would give me none at all?"

They admitted that they had thought it discreet to be silent, and that the struggle had taken place. And yet the very men who had seen it looked darkly at the smears which the bright cold air had already dried.

"We must return, Neville," said Mr. Crisparkle; "of course you will be glad to come back to clear yourself?"

"Of course, sir."

"Mr. Landless will walk at my side," the Minor Canon continued, looking around him. "Come, Neville!"

They set forth on the walk back; and the others, with one exception, straggled after them at various distances. Jasper walked on the other side of Neville, and never quitted that position. He was silent, while Mr. Crisparkle more than once repeated his former questions, and while Neville repeated his former answers; also, while they both hazarded some explanatory conjectures. He was obstinately silent, because Mr. Crisparkle's manner directly appealed to him to take some part in the discussion, and no appeal would move his fixed face. When they drew near to the city, and it was suggested by the Minor Canon that they might do well in calling on the Mayor at once, he assented with a stern nod; but he spake no word until they stood in Mr. Sapsea's parlor.

Mr. Sapsea being informed by Mr. Crisparkle of the circumstances under which they desired to make a voluntary statement before him, Mr. Jasper broke silence by declaring that he placed his whole reliance, humanly speaking, on Mr. Sapsea's penetration. There was no conceivable reason why his nephew should have suddenly absconded, unless Mr. Sapsea could suggest one, and then he would defer. There was no intelligible likelihood of his having returned to the river, and been accidentally drowned in the dark, unless it should appear likely to Mr. Sapsea, and then again he would defer. He washed his hands as clean as he could of all horrible suspicions, unless it should appear to Mr. Sapsea that some such were inseparable from his last companion before

his disappearance (not on good terms with previously), and then, once more, he would defer. His own state of mind, he being distracted with doubts, and laboring under dismal apprehensions, was not to be safely trusted ; but Mr. Sapsea's was

Mr. Sapsea expressed his opinion that the case had a dark look ; in short (and here his eyes rested full on Neville's countenance), an Un-English complexion. Having made this grand point, he wandered into a denser haze and maze of nonsense than even a mayor might have been expected to disport himself in, and came out of it with the brilliant discovery that to take the life of a fellow-creature was to take something that did n't belong to you. He wavered whether or no he should at once issue his warrant for the committal of Neville Landless to jail, under circumstances of grave suspicion ; and he might have gone so far as to do it but for the indignant protest of the Minor Canon, who undertook for the young man's remaining in his own house, and being produced by his own hands, whenever demanded. Mr. Jasper then understood Mr. Sapsea to suggest that the river should be dragged, that its banks should be rigidly examined, that particulars of the disappearance should be sent to all outlying places and to London, and that placards and advertisements should be widely circulated imploring Edwin Drood, if for any unknown reason he had withdrawn himself from his uncle's home and society, to take pity on that loving kinsman's sore bereavement and distress, and somehow inform him that he was yet alive. Mr. Sapsea was perfectly understood, for this was exactly his meaning (though he had said nothing about it) ; and measures were taken towards all these ends immediately.

"It would be difficult to determine which was the more oppressed with horror and amazement, Neville Landless or John Jasper. But that Jasper's position forced him to be active, while Neville's forced him to be passive, there would have been nothing to choose between them. Each was bowed down and broken.

With the earliest light of the next morning, men were at work upon the river, and other men — most of whom volunteered for the service — were examining the banks.

All the livelong day the search went on ; upon the river, with barge and pole, and drag and net ; upon the muddy and rushy shore, with jack-boot, hatchet, spade, rope, dogs, and all imaginable appliances. Even at night the river was specked with lanterns, and lurid with fires ; far-off creeks, into which the tide washed as it changed, had their knots of watchers, listening to the lapping of the stream, and looking out for any burden it might bear ; remote shingly causeways near the sea, and lonely points off which there was a race of water, had their unwonted flaring cressets and rough-coated figures when the next day dawned ; but no trace of Edwin Drood revisited the light of the sun.

All that day, again, the search went on. Now, in barge and boat ; and now ashore among the osiers, or tramping amidst mud and stakes and jagged stones in low-lying places, where solitary watermarks and signals of strange shapes showed like spectres, John Jasper worked and toiled. But to no purpose ; for still no trace of Edwin Drood revisited the light of the sun.

Setting his watches for that night again, so that vigilant eyes should be kept on every change of tide, he went home exhausted. Unkempt and disordered, bedaubed with mud that had dried upon him, and with much of his clothing torn to rags, he had but just dropped into his easy-chair, when Mr. Grewgious stood before him. "This is strange news," said Mr. Grewgious.

"Strange and fearful news."

Jasper had merely lifted up his heavy eyes to say it, and now dropped them again as he drooped, worn out, over one side of his easy-chair.

Mr. Grewgious smoothed his head and face, and stood looking at the fire.

"How is your ward ?" asked Jasper, after a time, in a faint, fatigued voice.

"Poor little thing ! You may imagine her condition."

"Have you seen his sister ?" inquired Jasper, as before.

"Whose ?"

The curtness of the counter-question, and the cool, slow manner in which, as he put it, Mr. Grewgious moved his eyes from the fire to his companion's face,

might at any other time have been exasperating. In his depression and exhaustion, Jasper merely opened his eyes to say, "The suspected young man's."

"Do you suspect him?" asked Mr. Grewgious.

"I don't know what to think. I cannot make up my mind."

"Nor I," said Mr. Grewgious. "But as you spoke of him as the suspected young man, I thought you *had* made up your mind. — I have just left Miss Landless."

"What is *her* state?"

"Defiance of all suspicion, and unbounded faith in her brother."

"Poor thing!"

"However," pursued Mr. Grewgious, "it is not of her that I came to speak. It is of my ward. I have a communication to make that will surprise you. At least, it has surprised me."

Jasper, with a groaning sigh, turned wearily in his chair.

"Shall I put it off till to-morrow?" said Mr. Grewgious. "Mind! I warn you, that I think it will surprise you!"

More attention and concentration came into John Jasper's eyes as they caught sight of Mr. Grewgious smoothing his head again, and again looking at the fire; but now, with a compressed and determined mouth.

"What is it?" demanded Jasper, becoming upright in his chair.

"To be sure," said Mr. Grewgious, provokingly slowly and internally, as he kept his eyes on the fire, "I might have known it sooner; she gave me the opening; but I am such an exceedingly Angular man, that it never occurred to me; I took all for granted."

"What is it?" demanded Jasper, once more.

Mr. Grewgious, alternately opening and shutting the palms of his hands as he warmed them at the fire, and looking fixedly at him sideways, and never changing either his action or his look in all that followed, went on to reply.

"This young couple, the lost youth and Miss Rosa, my ward, though so long betrothed, and so long recognizing their betrothal, and so near being married —"

Mr. Grewgious saw a staring white face and two quivering white lips, in the easy-chair, and saw two muddy hands gripping its sides. But for the hands, he might have thought he had never seen the face.

"— This young couple came gradually to the discovery (made on both sides pretty equally, I think) that they would be happier and better, both in their present and their future lives, as affectionate friends, or say rather as brother and sister, than as husband and wife."

Mr. Grewgious saw a lead-colored face in the easy-chair, and on its surface dreadful starting drops or bubbles, as if of steel.

"This young couple formed at length the healthy resolution of interchanging their discoveries, openly, sensibly, and tenderly. They met for that purpose. After some innocent and generous talk, they agreed to dissolve their existing, and their intended, relations, for ever and ever."

Mr. Grewgious saw a ghastly figure rise, open-mouthed, from the easy-chair, and lift its outspread hands towards its head.

"One of this young couple, and that one your nephew, fearful, however, that in the tenderness of your affection for him you would be bitterly disappointed by so wide a departure from his projected life, forbore to tell you the secret, for a few days, and left it to be disclosed by me, when I should come down to speak to you, and he would be gone. I speak to you, and he is gone."

Mr. Grewgious saw the ghastly figure throw back its head, clutch its hair with its hands, and turn with a writhing action from him.

"I have now said all I have to say, except that this young couple parted, firmly, though not without tears and sorrow, on the evening when you last saw them together."

Mr. Grewgious heard a terrible shriek, and saw no ghastly figure, sitting or standing; saw nothing but a heap of torn and miry clothes upon the floor.

Not changing his action even then, he opened and shut the palms of his hands as he warmed them, and looked down at it.



CHAPTER XVI.

DEVOTED.

WHEN John Jasper recovered from his fit or swoon, he found himself being tended by Mr. and Mrs. Tope, whom his visitor had summoned for the purpose. His visitor, wooden of aspect, sat stiffly in a chair, with his hands upon his knees, watching his recovery.

"There! You've come to nicely now, sir," said the tearful Mrs. Tope; "you were thoroughly worn out, and no wonder!"

"A man," said Mr. Grewgious, with his usual air of repeating a lesson, "cannot have his rest broken, and his mind cruelly tormented, and his body overtaxed by fatigue, without being thoroughly worn out."

"I fear I have alarmed you?" Jasper apologized faintly, when he was helped into his easy-chair.

"Not at all, I thank you," answered Mr. Grewgious.

"You are too considerate."

"Not at all, I thank you," answered Mr. Grewgious again.

"You must take some wine, sir," said Mrs. Tope, "and the jelly that I had ready for you, and that you would n't put your lips to at noon, though I warned you what would come of it, you know, and you not breakfasted; and you must have a wing of the roast fowl that has been put back twenty times if it's been put back once. It shall all be on table in five minutes, and this good gentleman belike will stop and see you take it."

This good gentleman replied with a snort, which might mean yes, or no, or anything, or nothing, and which Mrs. Tope would have found highly mystifying, but that her attention was divided by the service of the table.

"You will take something with me?" said Jasper, as the cloth was laid.

"I could n't get a morsel down my throat, I thank you," answered Mr. Grewgious.

Jasper both ate and drank almost voraciously. Combined with the hurry in his mode of doing it, was an evident indifference to the taste of what he took, suggesting that he ate and drank to fortify himself against any other failure of the spirits, far more than to gratify his palate. Mr. Grewgious in the mean time sat upright, with no expression in his face, and a hard kind of imperturbably polite protest all over him: as though he would have said, in reply to some invitation to discourse, "I could n't originate the faintest approach to an observation on any subject whatever, I thank you."

"Do you know," said Jasper, when he had pushed away his plate and glass, and had sat meditating for a few minutes, — "do you know that I find some crumbs of comfort in the communication with which you have so much amazed me?"

"Do you?" returned Mr. Grewgious; pretty plainly adding the unspoken clause, "I don't, I thank you!"

"After recovering from the shock of a piece of news of my dear boy, so entirely unexpected, and so destructive of all the castles I had built for him; and after having had time to think of it; yes."

"I shall be glad to pick up your crumbs," said Mr. Grewgious, dryly.

"Is there not, or is there — if I deceive myself, tell me so, and shorten my pain — is there not, or is there, hope that, finding himself in this new position, and becoming sensitively alive to the awkward burden of explanation, in this quarter, and that, and the other, with which it would load him, he avoided the awkwardness, and took to flight?"

"Such a thing might be," said Mr. Grewgious, pondering.

"Such a thing has been. I have read of cases in which people, rather than face a seven days' wonder, and have to account for themselves to the idle and importunate, have taken themselves away, and been long unheard of."

"I believe such things have happened," said Mr. Grewgious, pondering still.

“When I had, and could have, no suspicion,” pursued Jasper, eagerly following the new track, “that the dear lost boy had withheld anything from me, — most of all, such a leading matter as this, — what gleam of light was there for me in the whole black sky? When I supposed that his intended wife was here, and his marriage close at hand, how could I entertain the possibility of his voluntarily leaving this place, in a manner that would be so unaccountable, capricious, and cruel? But now that I know what you have told me, is there no little chink through which day pierces? Supposing him to have disappeared of his own act, is not his disappearance more accountable and less cruel? The fact of his having just parted from your ward is in itself a sort of reason for his going away. It does not make his mysterious departure the less cruel to me, it is true; but it relieves it of cruelty to her.”

Mr. Grewgious could not but assent to this.

“And even as to me,” continued Jasper, still pursuing the new track, with ardor, and, as he did so, brightening with hope: “he knew that you were coming to me; he knew that you were intrusted to tell me what you have told me; if your doing so has awakened a new train of thought in my perplexed mind, it reasonably follows that, from the same premises, he might have foreseen the inferences that I should draw. Grant that he did foresee them; and even the cruelty to me — and who am I! — John Jasper, Music Master! — vanishes.”

Once more, Mr. Grewgious could not but assent to this.

“I have had my distrusts, and terrible distrusts they have been,” said Jasper; “but your disclosure, overpowering as it was at first, — showing me that my own dear boy had had a great disappointing reservation from me, who so fondly loved him, — kindles hope within me. You do not extinguish it when I state it, but admit it to be a reasonable hope. I begin to believe it possible” — here he clasped his hands — “that he may have disappeared from among us of his own accord, and that he may yet be alive and well!”

Mr. Crisparkle came in at the moment, to whom Mr. Jasper repeated, —

"I begin to believe it possible that he may have disappeared of his own accord, and may yet be alive and well!"

Mr. Crisparkle taking a seat, and inquiring "Why so?" Mr. Jasper repeated the arguments he had just set forth. If they had been less plausible than they were, the good Minor Canon's mind would have been in a state of preparation to receive them, as exculpatory of his unfortunate pupil. But he, too, did really attach great importance to the lost young man's having been, so immediately before his disappearance, placed in a new and embarrassing relation towards every one acquainted with his projects and affairs; and the fact seemed to him to present the question in a new light.

"I stated to Mr. Sapsea, when we waited on him," said Jasper, as he really had done, "that there was no quarrel or difference between the two young men at their last meeting. We all know that their first meeting was, unfortunately, very far from amicable; but all went smoothly and quietly when they were last together at my house. My dear boy was not in his usual spirits; he was depressed, — I noticed that, — and I am bound henceforth to dwell upon the circumstance the more, now that I know there was a special reason for his being depressed, — a reason, moreover, which may possibly have induced him to absent himself."

"I pray to Heaven it may turn out so!" exclaimed Mr. Crisparkle.

"I pray to Heaven it may turn out so!" repeated Jasper. "You know — and Mr. Grewgious should now know likewise — that I took a great prepossession against Mr. Neville Landless, arising out of his furious conduct on that first occasion. You know that I came to you, extremely apprehensive, on my dear boy's behalf, of his mad violence. You know that I even entered in my Diary, and showed the entry to you, that I had dark forebodings against him. Mr. Grewgious ought to be possessed of the whole case. He shall not, through any suppression of mine, be informed of a part of it, and kept in ignorance of another part of it. I wish him to be good enough to understand that the communication he has made to me has hopefully influenced my mind, in spite

of its having been, before this mysterious occurrence took place, profoundly impressed against young Landless."

This fairness troubled the Minor Canon much. He felt that he was not as open in his own dealing. He charged against himself reproachfully that he had suppressed, so far, the two points of a second strong outbreak of temper against Edwin Drood on the part of Neville, and of the passion of jealousy having, to his own certain knowledge, flamed up in Neville's breast against him. He was convinced of Neville's innocence of any part in the ugly disappearance, and yet so many little circumstances combined so wofully against him, that he dreaded to add two more to their cumulative weight. He was among the truest of men; but he had been balancing in his mind, much to its distress, whether his volunteering to tell these two fragments of truth, at this time, would not be tantamount to a piecing together of falsehood in the place of truth.

However, here was a model before him. He hesitated no longer. Addressing Mr. Grewgious, as one placed in authority by the revelation he had brought to bear on the mystery (and surpassingly Angular Mr. Grewgious became when he found himself in that unexpected position), Mr. Crisparkle bore his testimony to Mr. Jasper's strict sense of justice, and, expressing his absolute confidence in the complete clearance of his pupil from the least taint of suspicion, sooner or later, avowed that his confidence in that young gentleman had been formed, in spite of his confidential knowledge that his temper was of the hottest and fiercest, and that it was directly incensed against Mr. Jasper's nephew, by the circumstance of his romantically supposing himself to be enamored of the same young lady. The sanguine reaction manifest in Mr. Jasper was proof even against this unlooked-for declaration. It turned him paler; but he repeated that he would cling to the hope he had derived from Mr. Grewgious; and that if no trace of his dear boy were found, leading to the dreadful inference that he had been made away with, he would cherish unto the last stretch of possibility, the idea, that he might have absconded of his own wild will.

Now, it fell out that Mr. Crisparkle, going away from this conference still very uneasy in his mind, and very

much troubled on behalf of the young man whom he held as a kind of prisoner in his own house, took a memorable night walk.

He walked to Cloisterham Weir.

He often did so, and consequently there was nothing remarkable in his footsteps tending that way. But the preoccupation of his mind so hindered him from planning any walk or taking heed of the objects he passed, that his first consciousness of being near the Weir was derived from the sound of the falling water close at hand.

"How did I come here!" was his first thought, as he stopped.

"Why did I come here!" was his second.

Then, he stood intently listening to the water. A familiar passage in his reading, about airy tongues that syllable men's names, rose so unbidden to his ear, that he put it from him with his hand, as if it were tangible.

It was starlight. The Weir was full two miles above the spot to which the young men had repaired to watch the storm. No search had been made up here, for the tide had been running strongly down at that time of the night of Christmas Eve, and the likeliest places for the discovery of a body, if a fatal accident had happened under such circumstances, all lay — both when the tide ebbed, and when it flowed again — between that spot and the sea. The water came over the Weir, with its usual sound on a cold starlight night, and little could be seen of it; yet Mr. Crisparkle had a strange idea that something unusual hung about the place.

He reasoned with himself: What was it? where was it? Put it to the proof. Which sense did it address?

No sense reported anything unusual there. He listened again, and his sense of hearing again checked the water coming over the Weir, with its usual sound on a cold starlight night.

Knowing very well that the mystery with which his mind was occupied might of itself give the place this haunted air, he strained those hawk's eyes of his for the correction of his sight. He got closer to the Weir, and peered at its well-known posts and timbers. Nothing in the least unusual was remotely shadowed forth. But he resolved that he would come back early in the morning.

The Weir ran through his broken sleep all night, and he was back again at sunrise. It was a bright frosty morning. The whole composition before him, when he stood where he had stood last night, was clearly discernible in its minutest details. He had surveyed it closely for some minutes, and was about to withdraw his eyes, when they were attracted keenly to one spot.

He turned his back upon the Weir, and looked far away at the sky, and at the earth, and then looked again at that one spot. It caught his sight again immediately, and he concentrated his vision upon it. He could not lose it now, though it was but such a speck in the landscape. It fascinated his sight. His hands began plucking off his coat. For it struck him that at that spot — a corner of the Weir — something glistened, which did not move and come over with the glistening water-drops, but remained stationary.

He assured himself of this, he threw off his clothes, he plunged into the icy water, and swam for the spot. Climbing the timbers, he took from them, caught among their interstices by its chain, a gold watch, bearing engraved upon its back, E. D.

He brought the watch to the bank, swam to the Weir again, climbed it, and dived off. He knew every hole and corner of all the depths, and dived and dived and dived, until he could bear the cold no more. His notion was that he would find the body; but he only found a shirt-pin sticking in some mud and ooze.

With these discoveries he returned to Cloisterham, and, taking Neville Landless with him, went straight to the Mayor. Mr. Jasper was sent for, the watch and shirt-pin were identified, Neville was detained, and the wildest frenzy and fatuity of evil report arose against him. He was of that vindictive and violent nature, that but for his poor sister, who alone had influence over him, and out of whose sight he was never to be trusted, he would be in the daily commission of murder. Before coming to England he had caused to be whipped to death sundry "Natives," — nomadic persons, encamping now in Asia, now in Africa, now in the West Indies, and now at the North Pole, — vaguely supposed in Cloisterham to be always black, always of great virtue, always calling

themselves Me, and everybody else Massa or Missie (according to sex), and always reading tracts of the obscurest meaning, in broken English, but always understanding them in the purest mother tongue. He had nearly brought Mrs. Crisparkle's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. (Those original expressions were Mr. Sapsea's.) He had repeatedly said he would have Mr. Crisparkle's life. He had repeatedly said he would have everybody's life, and become in effect the last man. He had been brought down to Cloisterham, from London, by an eminent Philanthropist, and why? Because that Philanthropist, had expressly declared, "I owe it to my fellow-creatures that he should be, in the words of BENTHAM, where he is the cause of the greatest danger to the smallest number."

These dropping shots from the blunderbusses of blunder-headedness might not have hit him in a vital place. But he had to stand against a trained and well-directed fire of arms of precision too. He had notoriously threatened the lost young man, and had, according to the showing of his own faithful friend and tutor, who strove so hard for him, a cause of bitter animosity (created by himself, and stated by himself) against that ill-starred fellow. He had armed himself with an offensive weapon for the fatal night, and he had gone off early in the morning, after making preparations for departure. He had been found with traces of blood on him; truly, they might have been wholly caused as he represented, but they might not, also. On a search-warrant being issued for the examination of his room, clothes, and so forth, it was discovered that he had destroyed all his papers, and rearranged all his possessions, on the very afternoon of the disappearance. The watch found at the Weir was challenged by the jeweller as one he had wound and set for Edwin Drood, at twenty minutes past two on that same afternoon; and it had run down, before being cast into the water; and it was the jeweller's positive opinion that it had never been rewound. This would justify the hypothesis that the watch was taken from him not long after he left Mr. Jasper's house at midnight, in company with the last person seen with him, and that it had been thrown away after being retained some hours. Why

thrown away? If he had been murdered, and so artfully disfigured, or concealed, or both, as that the murderer hoped identification to be impossible, except from something that he wore, assuredly the murderer would seek to remove from the body the most lasting, the best known, and the most easily recognizable things upon it. Those things would be the watch and shirt-pin. As to his opportunities of casting them into the river; if he were the object of these suspicions, they were easy. For he had been seen by many persons, wandering about on that side of the city — indeed on all sides of it — in a miserable and seemingly half-distracted manner. As to the choice of the spot, obviously such criminating evidence had better take its chance of being found anywhere, rather than upon himself or in his possession. Concerning the reconciliatory nature of the appointed meeting between the two young men, very little could be made of that, in young Landless's favor; for it distinctly appeared that the meeting originated, not with him, but with Mr. Crisparkle, and that it was urged on by Mr. Crisparkle; and who could say how unwillingly, or in what ill-conditioned mood, his enforced pupil had gone to it? The more his case was looked into, the weaker it became in every point. Even the broad suggestion that the lost young man had absconded was rendered additionally improbable on the showing of the young lady from whom he had so lately parted; for, what did she say, with great earnestness and sorrow, when interrogated: That he had, expressly and enthusiastically, planned with her, that he would await the arrival of her guardian, Mr. Grewgious. And yet, be it observed, he disappeared before that gentleman appeared.

On the suspicions thus urged and supported, Neville was detained and re-detained, and the search was pressed on every hand, and Jasper labored night and day. But nothing more was found. No discovery being made which proved the lost man to be dead, it at length became necessary to release the person suspected of having made away with him. Neville was set at large. Then a consequence ensued which Mr. Crisparkle had too well foreseen. Neville must leave the place, for the place shunned him and cast him out. Even had it not been so,

the dear old china shepherdess would have worried herself to death with fears for her son, and with general trepidation occasioned by their having such an inmate. Even had that not been so, the authority to which the Minor Canon deferred officially would have settled the point.

"Mr. Crisparkle," quoth the Dean, "human justice may err, but it must act according to its lights. The days of taking sanctuary are past. This young man must not take sanctuary with us."

"You mean that he must leave my house, sir?"

"Mr. Crisparkle," returned the prudent Dean, "I claim no authority in your house. I merely confer with you, on the painful necessity you find yourself under, of depriving this young man of the great advantages of your counsel and instruction."

"It is very lamentable, sir," Mr. Crisparkle represented.

"Very much so," the Dean assented.

"And if it be a necessity," Mr. Crisparkle faltered.

"As you unfortunately find it to be —" returned the Dean.

Mr. Crisparkle bowed submissively. "It is hard to prejudge his case, sir, but I am sensible that —"

"Just so. Perfectly. As you say, Mr. Crisparkle," interposed the Dean, nodding his head smoothly, "there is nothing else to be done. No doubt, no doubt. There is no alternative, as your good sense has discovered."

"I am entirely satisfied of his perfect innocence, sir, nevertheless."

"We-e-ell!" said the Dean, in a more confidential tone, and slightly glancing around him, "I would not say so, generally. Not generally. Enough of suspicion attaches to him to — no, I think I would not say so, generally."

Mr. Crisparkle bowed again.

"It does not become us, perhaps," pursued the Dean, "to be partisans. Not partisans. We clergy keep our hearts warm and our heads cool, and we hold a judicious middle course."

"I hope you do not object, sir, to my having stated in public, emphatically, that he will reappear here, when-

ever any new suspicion may be awakened, or any new circumstance may come to light in this extraordinary matter?"

"Not at all," returned the Dean. "And yet, do you know, I don't think," with a very nice and neat emphasis on those two words, "I *don't think* I would state it, emphatically. State it? Ye-e-es! But emphatically? No-o-o. I *think* not. In point of fact, Mr. Crisparkle, keeping our hearts warm and our heads cool, we need do nothing emphatically."

So Minor Canon Row knew Neville Landless no more, and he went whithersoever he would, or could, with a blight upon his name and fame.

It was not until then that John Jasper silently resumed his place in the choir. Haggard and red-eyed, his hopes plainly had deserted him, his sanguine mood was gone, and all his worst misgivings had come back. A day or two afterwards, while unrobing, he took his Diary from a pocket of his coat, turned the leaves, and with an impressive look, and without one spoken word, handed this entry to Mr. Crisparkle to read:—

"My dear boy is murdered. The discovery of the watch and shirt-pin convinces me that he was murdered that night, and that his jewelry was taken from him to prevent identification by its means. All the delusive hopes I had founded on his separation from his betrothed wife, I give to the winds. They perish before this fatal discovery. I now swear, and record the oath on this page, That I nevermore will discuss this mystery with any human creature, until I hold the clew to it in my hand. That I never will relax in my secrecy or in my search. That I will fasten the crime of the murder of my dear dead boy upon the murderer. And That I devote myself to his destruction."

CHAPTER XVII.

PHILANTHROPY, PROFESSIONAL AND UNPROFESSIONAL.

FULL half a year had come and gone, and Mr. Crisparkle sat in a waiting-room in the London chief offices of the Haven of Philanthropy, until he could have audience of Mr. Honeythunder.

In his college-days of athletic exercises, Mr. Crisparkle had known professors of the Noble Art of fisticuffs, and had attended two or three of their gloved gatherings. He had now an opportunity of observing that as to the phrenological formation of the backs of their heads, the Professing Philanthropists were uncommonly like the Pugilists. In the development of all those organs which constitute, or attend, a propensity to "pitch into" your fellow-creatures, the Philanthropists were remarkably favored. There were several Professors passing in and out, with exactly the aggressive air upon them of being ready for a turn-up with any Novice who might happen to be on hand, that Mr. Crisparkle well remembered in the circles of the Fancy. Preparations were in progress for a moral little Mill somewhere on the rural circuit, and other Professors were backing this or that Heavy-Weight as good for such or such speech-making hits, so very much after the manner of the sporting publicans that the intended Resolutions might have been Rounds. In an official manager of these displays much celebrated for his platform tactics, Mr. Crisparkle recognized (in a suit of black) the counterpart of a deceased benefactor of his species, an eminent public character, once known to Fame as Frosty-faced Fogo, who in days of yore superintended the formation of the magic circle with the ropes and stakes. There were only three conditions of resemblance wanting between these Professors and those. Firstly, the Philanthropists

were in very bad training: much too fleshy, and presenting, both in face and figure, a superabundance of what is known to Pugilistic Experts as Suet Pudding. Secondly, the Philanthropists had not the good temper of the Pugilists, and used worse language. Thirdly, their fighting code stood in great need of revision, as empowering them not only to bore their man to the ropes, but to bore him to the confines of distraction; also to hit him when he was down, hit him anywhere and anyhow, kick him, stamp upon him, gouge him, and maul him behind his back without mercy. In these last particulars the Professors of the Noble Art were much nobler than the Professors of Philanthropy.

Mr. Crisparkle was so completely lost in musing on these similarities and dissimilarities, at the same time watching the crowd which came and went by, always, as it seemed, on errands of antagonistically snatching something from somebody, and never giving anything to anybody: that his name was called before he heard it. On his at length responding, he was shown by a miserably shabby and underpaid stipendiary Philanthropist (who could hardly have done worse if he had taken service with a declared enemy of the human race) to Mr. Honeythunder's room.

"Sir," said Mr. Honeythunder in his tremendous voice, like a schoolmaster issuing orders to a boy of whom he had a bad opinion, "sit down."

Mr. Crisparkle seated himself.

Mr. Honeythunder, having signed the remaining few score of a few thousand circulars, calling upon a corresponding number of families without means to come forward, stump up instantly, and be Philanthropists, or go to the Devil, another shabby stipendiary Philanthropist (highly disinterested, if in earnest) gathered these into a basket and walked off with them.

"Now, Mr. Crisparkle," said Mr. Honeythunder, turning his chair half round towards him when they were alone, and squaring his arms with his hands on his knees, and his brows knitted as if he added, I am going to make short work of *you*, — "now, Mr. Crisparkle, we entertain different views, you and I, sir, of the sanctity of human life."

"Do we?" returned the Minor Canon

"We do, sir."

"Might I ask you," said the Minor Canon, "what are your views on that subject?"

"That human life is a thing to be held sacred, sir."

"Might I ask you," pursued the Minor Canon as before, "what you suppose to be my views on that subject?"

"By George, sir!" returned the Philanthropist, squaring his arms still more, as he frowned on Mr. Crisparkle: "they are best known to yourself."

"Readily admitted. But you began by saying that we took different views, you know. Therefore (or you could not say so) you must have set up some views as mine. Pray, what views *have* you set up as mine?"

"Here is a man — and a young man," said Mr. Honeythunder, as if that made the matter infinitely worse, and he could have easily borne the loss of an old one: "swept off the face of the earth by a deed of violence. What do you call that?"

"Murder," said the Minor Canon.

"What do you call the doer of that deed, sir?"

"A murderer," said the Minor Canon.

"I am glad to hear you admit so much, sir," retorted Mr. Honeythunder, in his most offensive manner; "and I candidly tell you that I did n't expect it." Here he lowered heavily at Mr. Crisparkle again.

"Be so good as to explain what you mean by those very unjustifiable expressions."

"I don't sit here, sir," returned the Philanthropist, raising his voice to a roar, "to be browbeaten."

"As the only other person present, no one can possibly know that better than I do," returned the Minor Canon very quietly. "But I interrupt your explanation."

"Murder!" proceeded Mr. Honeythunder, in a kind of boisterous revery, with his platform folding of his arms, and his platform nod of abhorrent reflection after each short sentiment of a word. Bloodshed! Abel! Cain! I hold no terms with Cain. I repudiate with a shudder the red hand when it is offered me."

Instead of instantly leaping into his chair and cheering himself hoarse, as the Brotherhood in public meeting as

sembled would infallibly have done on this cue, Mr. Crisparkle merely reversed the quiet crossing of his legs, and said mildly, "Don't let me interrupt your explanation — when you begin it."

"The Commandments say no murder. NO murder, sir!" proceeded Mr. Honeythunder, platformally pausing as if he took Mr. Crisparkle to task for having distinctly asserted that they said, You may do a little murder and then leave off.

"And they also say, you shall bear no false witness," observed Mr. Crisparkle.

"Enough!" bellowed Mr. Honeythunder, with a solemnity and severity that would have brought the house down at a meeting, "E—e—nough! My late wards being now of age, and I being released from a trust which I cannot contemplate without a thrill of horror, there are the accounts which you have undertaken to accept on their behalf, and there is a statement of the balance which you have undertaken to receive, and which you cannot receive too soon. And let me tell you, sir, I wish, that as a man and a Minor Canon, you were better employed," with a nod. "Better employed," with another nod. "Bet—ter em—ployed!" with another and the three nods added up.

Mr. Crisparkle rose, a little heated in the face, but with perfect command of himself.

"Mr. Honeythunder," he said, taking up the papers referred to, "my being better or worse employed than I am at present is a matter of taste and opinion. You might think me better employed in enrolling myself a member of your Society."

"Ay, indeed, sir!" retorted Mr. Honeythunder, shaking his head in a threatening manner. "It would have been better for you if you had done that long ago!"

"I think otherwise."

"Or," said Mr. Honeythunder, shaking his head again, "I might think one of your profession better employed in devoting himself to the discovery and punishment of guilt than in leaving that duty to be undertaken by a layman."

"I may regard my profession from a point of view which teaches me that its first duty is towards those who are in necessity and tribulation, who are desolate and

oppressed," said Mr. Crisparkle. "However, as I have quite clearly satisfied myself that it is no part of my profession to make professions, I say no more of that. But I owe it to Mr. Neville, and to Mr. Neville's sister (and in a much lower degree to myself), to say to you that I *know* I was in the full possession and understanding of Mr. Neville's mind and heart at the time of this occurrence; and that, without in the least coloring or concealing what was to be deplored in him and required to be corrected, I feel certain that his tale is true. Feeling that certainty, I befriend him. As long as that certainty shall last I will befriend him. And if any consideration could shake me in this resolve, I should be so ashamed of myself for my meanness that no man's good opinion, — no, nor no woman's, — so gained, could compensate me for the loss of my own."

Good fellow! Manly fellow! And he was so modest, too. There was no more self-assertion in the Minor Canon than in the school-boy who had stood in the breezy playing-fields keeping a wicket. He was simply and stanchly true to his duty alike in the large case and in the small. So all true souls ever are. So every true soul ever was, ever is, and ever will be. There is nothing little to the really great in spirit.

"Then who do you make out did the deed?" asked Mr. Honeythunder, turning on him abruptly.

"Heaven forbid," said Mr. Crisparkle, "that in my desire to clear one man I should lightly criminate another! I accuse no one."

"Tcha!" ejaculated Mr. Honeythunder with great disgust; for this was by no means the principle on which the Philanthropic Brotherhood usually proceeded. "And, sir, you are not a disinterested witness, we must bear in mind."

"How am I an interested one?" inquired Mr. Crisparkle, smiling innocently, at a loss to imagine.

"There was a certain stipend, sir, paid to you for your pupil, which may have warped your judgment a bit," said Mr. Honeythunder, coarsely.

"Perhaps I expect to retain it still?" Mr. Crisparkle returned, enlightened; "do you mean that too?"

"Well, sir," returned the professional Philanthropist,

getting up, and thrusting his hands down into his trousers' pockets, "I don't go about measuring people for caps. If people find I have any about me that fit 'em, they can put 'em on and wear 'em, if they like. That's their lookout, not mine."

Mr. Crisparkle eyed him with a just indignation, and took him to task thus:—

"Mr. Honeythunder, I hoped when I came in here that I might be under no necessity of commenting on the introduction of platform manners or platform manœuvres among the decent forbearances of private life. But you have given me such a specimen of both, that I should be a fit subject for both if I remained silent respecting them. They are detestable."

"They don't suit *you*, I dare say, sir."

"They are," repeated Mr. Crisparkle, without noticing the interruption, "detestable. They violate equally the justice that should belong to Christians, and the restraints that should belong to gentlemen. You assume a great crime to have been committed by one whom I, acquainted with the attendant circumstances, and having numerous reasons on my side, devoutly believe to be innocent of it. Because I differ from you on that vital point, what is your platform resource? Instantly to turn upon me, charging that I have no sense of the enormity of the crime itself, but am its aider and abettor! So, another time—taking me as representing your opponent in other cases—you set up a platform credulity: a moved and seconded and carried unanimously profession of faith in some ridiculous delusion or mischievous imposition. I decline to believe it, and you fall back upon your platform resource of proclaiming that I believe nothing; that because I will not bow down to a false God of your making, I deny the true God! Another time, you make the platform discovery that War is a calamity, and you propose to abolish it by a string of twisted resolutions tossed into the air like the tail of a kite. I do not admit the discovery to be yours in the least, and I have not a grain of faith in your remedy. Again, your platform resource of representing me as revelling in the horrors of a battle-field like a fiend incarnate! Another time, in another of your indiscriminating platform rushes, you

would punish the sober for the drunken. I claim consideration for the comfort, convenience, and refreshment of the sober ; and you presently make platform proclamation that I have a depraved desire to turn Heaven's creatures into swine and wild beasts ! In all such cases your movers, and your seconders, and your supporters — your regular Professors of all degrees — run amuck like so many mad Malays ; habitually attributing the lowest and basest motives with the utmost recklessness (let me call your attention to a recent instance in yourself for which you should blush), and quoting figures which you know to be as wilfully one-sided as a statement of any complicated account that should be all Creditor side and no Debtor, or all Debtor side and no Creditor. Therefore it is, Mr. Honeythunder, that I consider the platform a sufficiently bad example and a sufficiently bad school, even in public life ; but hold that, carried into private life, it becomes an unendurable nuisance."

"These are strong words, sir !" exclaimed the Philanthropist.

"I hope so," said Mr. Crisparkle. "Good morning."

He walked out of the Haven at a great rate, but soon fell into his regular brisk pace, and soon had a smile upon his face as he went along, wondering what the china shepherdess would have said if she had seen him pounding Mr. Honeythunder in the late little lively affair. For Mr. Crisparkle had just enough of harmless variety to hope that he had hit hard, and to glow with the belief that he had trimmed the Philanthropic jacket pretty handsomely.

He took himself to Staple Inn, but not to P. J. T. and Mr. Grewgious. Full many a creaking stair he climbed before he reached some attic rooms in a corner, turned the latch of their unbolted door, and stood beside the table of Neville Landless.

An air of retreat and solitude hung about the rooms, and about their inhabitant. He was much worn, and so were they. Their sloping ceilings, cumbrous rusty locks and grates, and heavy wooden bins and beams, slowly mouldering withal, had a prisonous look, and he had the haggard face of a prisoner. Yet the sunlight shone in at the ugly garret window which had a penthouse to itself

thrust out among the tiles; and on the cracked and smoke-blackened parapet beyond, some of the deluded sparrows of the place rheumatically hopped, like little feathered cripples who had left their crutches in their nests; and there was a play of living leaves at hand that changed the air, and made an imperfect sort of music in it that would have been melody in the country.

The rooms were sparsely furnished, but with good store of books. Everything expressed the abode of a poor student. That Mr. Crisparkle had been either chooser, lender, or donor of the books, or that he combined the three characters, might have been easily seen in the friendly beam of his eyes upon them as he entered.

"How goes it, Neville?"

"I am in good heart, Mr. Crisparkle, and working away."

"I wish your eyes were not quite so large and not quite so bright," said the Minor Canon, slowly releasing the hand he had taken in his.

"They brighten at the sight of you," returned Neville. "If you were to fall away from me, they would soon be dull enough."

"Rally, rally!" urged the other, in a stimulating tone. "Fight for it, Neville!"

"If I were dying, I feel as if a word from you would rally me; if my pulse had stopped, I feel as if your touch would make it beat again," said Neville. "But I *have* rallied, and am doing famously."

Mr. Crisparkle turned him with his face a little more towards the light.

"I want to see a ruddier touch here, Neville," he said, indicating his own healthy cheek by way of pattern; "I want more sun to shine upon you."

Neville drooped suddenly as he replied in a lowered voice, "I am not hardy enough for that yet. I may become so, but I cannot bear it yet. If you had gone through those Cloisterham streets as I did; if you had seen, as I did, those averted eyes, and the better sort of people silently giving me too much room to pass, that I might not touch them or come near them, you would n't think it quite unreasonable that I cannot go about in the daylight."

"My poor fellow!" said the Minor Canon, in a tone so purely sympathetic that the young man caught his hand: "I never said it was unreasonable: never thought so. But I should like you to do it."

"And that would give me the strongest motive to do it. But I cannot yet. I cannot persuade myself that the eyes of even the stream of strangers I pass in this vast city look at me without suspicion. I feel marked and tainted, even when I go out—as I do only—at night. But the darkness covers me then, and I take courage from it."

Mr. Crisparkle laid a hand upon his shoulder, and stood looking down at him.

"If I could have changed my name," said Neville, "I would have done so. But as you wisely pointed out to me, I can't do that, for it would look like guilt. If I could have gone to some distant place, I might have found relief in that, but the thing is not to be thought of, for the same reason. Hiding and escaping would be the construction in either case. It seems a little hard to be so tied to a stake, and innocent; but I don't complain."

"And you must expect no miracle to help you, Neville," said Mr. Crisparkle, compassionately.

"No, sir, I know that. The ordinary fulness of time and circumstance is all I have to trust to."

"It will right you at last, Neville."

"So I believe, and I hope I may live to know it."

But perceiving that the despondent mood into which he was falling cast a shadow on the Minor Canon, and (it may be) feeling that the broad hand upon his shoulder was not then quite as steady as its own natural strength had rendered it when it first touched him just now, he brightened and said, —

"Excellent circumstances for study anyhow! and you know, Mr. Crisparkle, what need I have of study in all ways. Not to mention that you have advised me to study for the difficult profession of the law, specially, and that of course I am guiding myself by the advice of such a friend and helper. Such a good friend and helper!"

He took the fortifying hand from his shoulder, and kissed it. Mr. Crisparkle beamed at the books, but not so brightly as when he had entered.

"I gather from your silence on the subject that my late guardian is adverse, Mr. Crisparkle?"

The Minor Canon answered, "Your late guardian is a—a most unreasonable person, and it signifies nothing to any reasonable person whether he is *adverse* or *perverse*, or the *reverse*."

"Well for me that I have enough with economy to live upon," sighed Neville, half wearily and half cheerily, "while I wait to be learned and wait to be righted! Else I might have proved the proverb that while the grass grows the steed starves!"

He opened some books as he said it, and was soon immersed in their interleaved and annotated passages, while Mr. Crisparkle sat beside him, expounding, correcting, and advising. The Minor Canon's cathedral duties made these visits of his difficult to accomplish, and only to be compassed at intervals of many weeks. But they were as serviceable as they were precious to Neville Landless.

When they had got through such studies as they had in hand, they stood leaning on the window-sill, and looking down upon the patch of garden. "Next week," said Mr. Crisparkle, "you will cease to be alone, and will have a devoted companion."

"And yet," returned Neville, "this seems an uncongenial place to bring my sister to!"

"I don't think so," said the Minor Canon. "There is duty to be done here; and there are womanly feeling, sense, and courage wanted here."

"I meant," explained Neville, "that the surroundings are so dull and unwomanly, and that Helena can have no suitable friend or society here."

"You have only to remember," said Mr. Crisparkle, "that you are here yourself, and that she has to draw you into the sunlight."

They were silent for a little while, and then Mr. Crisparkle began anew.

"When we first spoke together, Neville, you told me that your sister had risen out of the disadvantages of your past lives as superior to you as the tower of Cloisterham Cathedral is higher than the chimneys of Minor Canon Corner. Do you remember that?"

“Right well!”

“I was inclined to think it at the time an enthusiastic flight. No matter what I think it now. What I would emphasize is, that under the head of Pride your sister is a great and opportune example to you.”

“Under *all* heads that are included in the composition of a fine character, she is.”

“Say so; but take this one. Your sister has learnt how to govern what is proud in her nature. She can dominate it even when it is wounded through her sympathy with you. No doubt she has suffered deeply in those same streets where you suffered deeply. No doubt her life is darkened by the cloud that darkens yours. But bending her pride into a grand composure that is not haughty or aggressive, but is sustained confidence in you and in the truth, she has won her way through those streets until she passes along them as high in the general respect as any one who treads them. Every day and hour of her life since Edwin Drood’s disappearance, she has faced malignity and folly — for you — as only a brave nature well directed can. So it will be with her to the end. Another and weaker kind of pride might sink broken-hearted, but never such a pride as hers: which knows no shrinking, and can get no mastery over her.”

The pale cheek beside him flushed under the comparison and the hint implied in it. “I will do all I can to imitate her,” said Neville.

“Do so, and be a truly brave man as she is a truly brave woman,” answered Mr. Crisparkle, stoutly. “It is growing dark. Will you go my way with me, when it is quite dark? Mind! It is not I who wait for darkness.”

Neville replied that he would accompany him directly. But Mr. Crisparkle said he had a moment’s call to make on Mr. Grewgious as an act of courtesy, and would run across to that gentleman’s chambers, and rejoin Neville on his own doorstep if he would come down there to meet him.

Mr. Grewgious, bolt upright as usual, sat taking his wine in the dusk at his open window; his wineglass and decanter on the round table at his elbow; himself and his legs on the window-seat; only one hinge in his whole body, like a bootjack.

"How do you do, reverend sir?" said Mr. Grewgious, with abundant offers of hospitality which were as cordially declined as made. "And how is your charge getting on over the way in the set that I had the pleasure of recommending to you as vacant and eligible?"

Mr. Crisparkle replied suitably.

"I am glad you approve of them," said Mr. Grewgious, "because I entertain a sort of fancy for having him under my eye."

As Mr. Grewgious had to turn his eye up considerably, before he could see the chambers, the phrase was to be taken figuratively and not literally.

"And how did you leave Mr. Jasper, reverend sir?" said Mr. Grewgious.

Mr. Crisparkle had left him pretty well.

"And where did you leave Mr. Jasper, reverend sir?"

Mr. Crisparkle had left him at Cloisterham.

"And when did you leave Mr. Jasper, reverend sir?"

That morning.

"Umps!" said Mr. Grewgious. "He did n't say he was coming, perhaps?"

"Coming where?"

"Anywhere, for instance?" said Mr. Grewgious.

"No."

"Because here he is," said Mr. Grewgious, who had asked all these questions with his preoccupied glance directed out at window. "And he don't look agreeable; does he?"

Mr. Crisparkle was craning towards the window, when Mr. Grewgious added, —

"If you will kindly step round here behind me in the gloom of the room, and will cast your eye at the second-floor landing window, in yonder house, I think you will hardly fail to see a slinking individual in whom I recognize our local friend."

"You are right!" cried Mr. Crisparkle.

"Umps!" said Mr. Grewgious. Then he added, turning his face so abruptly that his head nearly came into collision with Mr. Crisparkle's: "What should you say that our local friend was up to?"

The last passage he had been shown in the Diary returned on Mr. Crisparkle's mind with the force of a strong

recoil, and he asked Mr. Grewgious if he thought it possible that Neville was to be harassed by the keeping of a watch upon him?

"A watch," repeated Mr. Grewgious, musingly. "Ay!"

"Which would not only of itself haunt and torture his life," said Mr. Crisparkle, warmly, "but would expose him to the torment of a perpetually reviving suspicion, whatever he might do, or wherever he might go?"

"Ay!" said Mr. Grewgious, musingly still. "Do I see him waiting for you?"

"No doubt you do."

"Then *would* you have the goodness to excuse my getting up to see you out, and to go out to join him, and to go the way that you were going, and to take no notice of our local friend?" said Mr. Grewgious. "I entertain a sort of fancy for having *him* under my eye to-night, do you know?"

Mr. Crisparkle, with a significant nod, complied, and, rejoining Neville, went away with him. They dined together, and parted at the yet unfinished and undeveloped railway station: Mr. Crisparkle to get home; Neville to walk the streets, cross the bridges, make a wide round of the city in the friendly darkness, and tire himself out.

It was midnight when he returned from his solitary expedition, and climbed his staircase. The night was hot, and the windows of the staircase were all wide open. Coming to the top, it gave him a passing chill of surprise (there being no rooms but his up there) to find a stranger sitting on the window-sill, more after the manner of a venturesome glazier than an amateur ordinarily careful of his neck; in fact, so much more outside the window than inside, as to suggest the thought that he must have come up by the waterspout instead of the stairs.

The stranger said nothing until Neville put his key in his door; then, seeming to make sure of his identity from the action, he spoke.

"I beg your pardon," he said, coming from the window with a frank and smiling air, and a prepossessing address; "the beans."

Neville was quite at a loss.

"Runners," said the visitor. "Scarlet. Next door at the back."

"Oh!" returned Neville. "And the mignonette and wallflower?"

"The same," said the visitor.

"Pray walk in."

"Thank you."

Neville lighted his candles and the visitor sat down. A handsome gentleman, with a young face, but an older figure in its robustness and its breadth of shoulder; say a man of eight-and-twenty, or at the utmost thirty; so extremely sunburnt that the contrast between his brown visage and the white forehead shaded out of doors by his hat, and the glimpses of white throat below the neckerchief, would have been almost ludicrous but for his broad temples, bright blue eyes, clustering brown hair, and laughing teeth.

"I have noticed," said he; "— my name is Tartar." Neville inclined his head.

"I have noticed (excuse me) that you shut yourself up a good deal, and that you seem to like my garden aloft here. If you would like a little more of it, I could throw out a few lines and stays between my windows and yours, which the runners would take to directly. And I have some boxes, both of mignonette and wallflower, that I could shove on along the gutter (with a boat-hook I have by me) to your windows, and draw back again when they wanted watering or gardening, and shove on again when they were shipshape, so that they would cause you no trouble. I could n't take this liberty without asking your permission, so I venture to ask it. Tartar, corresponding set, next door."

"You are very kind."

"Not at all. I ought to apologize for looking in so late. But having noticed (excuse me) that you generally walk out at night, I thought I should inconvenience you least by awaiting your return. I am always afraid of inconveniencing busy men, being an idle man."

"I should not have thought so, from your appearance."

"No? I take it as a compliment. In fact, I was bred in the Royal Navy and was First Lieutenant when I quit-
ted it. But an uncle, disappointed in the service, leav-

ing me his property on condition that I left the Navy, I accepted the fortune and resigned my commission."

"Lately, I presume?"

"Well, I had had twelve or fifteen years of knocking about first. I came here some nine months before you; I had had one crop before you came. I chose this place because, having served last in a little Corvette, I knew I should feel more at home where I had a constant opportunity of knocking my head against the ceiling. Besides, it would never do for a man who had been aboard ship from his boyhood to turn luxurious all at once. Besides, again: having been accustomed to a very short allowance of land all my life, I thought I'd feel my way to the command of a landed estate by beginning in boxes."

Whimsically as this was said, there was a touch of merry earnestness in it that made it doubly whimsical.

"However," said the Lieutenant, "I have talked quite enough about myself. It is not my way I hope; it has merely been to present myself to you naturally. If you will allow me to take the liberty I have described, it will be a charity, for it will give me something more to do. And you are not to suppose that it will entail any interruption or intrusion on you, for that is far from my intention."

Neville replied that he was greatly obliged, and that he thankfully accepted the kind proposal.

"I am very glad to take your windows in tow," said the Lieutenant. "From what I have seen of you when I have been gardening at mine, and you have been looking on, I have thought you (excuse me) rather too studious and delicate! May I ask, is your health at all affected?"

"I have undergone some mental distress," said Neville, confused, "which has stood me in the stead of illness."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Tartar.

With the greatest delicacy he shifted his ground to the windows again, and asked if he could look at one of them. On Neville's opening it, he immediately sprang out, as if he were going aloft with a whole watch in an emergency, and were setting a bright example.

“For Heaven’s sake!” cried Neville, “don’t do that! Where are you going, Mr. Tartar? You’ll be dashed to pieces!”

“All well!” said the Lieutenant, coolly looking about him on the housetop. “All taut and trim here. Those lines and stays shall be rigged before you turn out in the morning. May I take this short cut home and say, Good night?”

“Mr. Tartar!” urged Neville. “Pray! It makes me giddy to see you!”

But Mr. Tartar, with a wave of his hand and the deftness of a cat, had already dipped through his scuttle of scarlet runners without breaking a leaf, and “gone below.”

Mr. Grewgious, his bedroom window-blind held aside with his hand, happened at that moment to have Neville’s chambers under his eye for the last time that night. Fortunately his eye was on the front of the house and not the back, or this remarkable appearance and disappearance might have broken his rest, as a phenomenon. But Mr. Grewgious seeing nothing there, not even a light in the windows, his gaze wandered from the windows to the stars, as if he would have read in them something that was hidden from him. Many of us would if we could; but none of us so much as know our letters in the stars yet, — or seem likely to do it in this state of existence, — and few languages can be read until their alphabets are mastered.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SETTLER IN CLOISTERHAM.

AT about this time a stranger appeared in Cloisterham, a white-haired personage with black eyebrows. Being buttoned up in a tightish blue surtout, with a buff waistcoat and gray trousers, he had something of a military air; but he announced himself at the Crozier (the orthodox hotel, where he put up with a portmanteau) as an idle dog who lived upon his means; and he further announced that he had a mind to take a lodging in the picturesque old city for a month or two, with a view of settling down there altogether. Both announcements were made in the coffee-room of the Crozier, to all whom it might, or might not, concern, by the stranger as he stood with his back to the empty fireplace, waiting for his fried sole, veal cutlet, and pint of sherry. And the waiter (business being chronically slack at the Crozier) represented all whom it might or might not concern, and absorbed the whole of the information.

This gentleman's white head was unusually large, and his shock of white hair was unusually thick and ample. "I suppose, waiter," he said, shaking his shock of hair, as a Newfoundland dog might shake his before sitting down to dinner, "that a fair lodging for a single buffer might be found in these parts, eh?"

The waiter had no doubt of it.

"Something old," said the gentleman. "Take my hat down for a moment from that peg, will you? No, I don't want it; look into it. What do you see written there?"

The waiter read, "Datchery."

"Now you know my name," said the gentleman,—"Dick Datchery. Hang it up again. I was saying something old is what I should prefer, something odd

and out of the way ; something venerable, architectural, and inconvenient."

"We have a good choice of inconvenient lodgings in the town, sir, I think," replied the waiter, with modest confidence in its resources that way ; indeed, I have no doubt that we could suit you that far, however particular you might be. But a architectural lodging !" That seemed to trouble the waiter's head, and he shook it.

"Anything Cathedralry now," Mr. Datchery suggested.

"Mr. Tope," said the waiter, brightening, as he rubbed his chin with his hand, "would be the likeliest party to inform in that line."

"Who is Mr. Tope ?" inquired Dick Datchery.

The waiter explained that he was the Verger, and that Mrs. Tope had indeed once upon a time let lodgings herself, — or offered to let them ; but that as nobody had ever taken them, Mrs. Tope's window-bill, long a Cloisterham Institution, had disappeared ; probably had tumbled down one day, and never been put up again."

"I'll call on Mrs. Tope," said Mr. Datchery, "after dinner."

So when he had done his dinner, he was duly directed to the spot, and sallied out for it. But the Crozier being an hotel of a most retiring disposition, and the waiter's directions being fatally precise, he soon became bewildered, and went boggling about and about the Cathedral Tower, whenever he could catch a glimpse of it, with a general impression on his mind that Mrs. Tope's was somewhere very near it, and that, like the children in the game of hot boiled beans and very good butter, he was warm in his search when he saw the Tower, and cold when he did n't see it.

He was getting very cold indeed when he came upon a fragment of burial-ground in which an unhappy sheep was grazing. Unhappy, because a hideous small boy was stoning it through the railings, and had already lamed it in one leg, and was much excited by the benevolent sportsman-like purpose of breaking its other three legs, and bringing it down.

"It 'im ag'in !" cried the boy, as the poor creature leaped, "and made a dint in his wool !"

"Let him be!" said Mr. Datchery. "Don't you see you have lamed him?"

"Yer lie," returned the sportsman. "'E went and lamed 'isself. I see 'im do it, and I giv' 'im a shy as a Widdy-warning to 'im not to go a bruising' 'is master's mutton any more."

"Come here."

"I won't; I'll come when yer can ketch me."

"Stay there then, and show me which is Mr. Tope's."

"'Ow can I stay here and show you which is Topeseses, when Topeseses is t'other side the Kin-freederal, and over the crossings, and round ever so many corners? Stoo-pid! Ya-a-ah!"

"Show me where it is, and I'll give you something."

"Come on, then!"

This brisk dialogue concluded, the boy led the way, and by and by stopped at some distance from an arched passage, pointing.

"Lookie yonder. You see that there winder and door?"

"That's Tope's?"

"Yer lie; it ain't. That's Jarsper's."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Datchery, with a second look of some interest.

"Yes, and I ain't a-goin' no nearer 'Im, I tell yer."

"Why not?"

"Cos I ain't a-going to be lifted off my legs and 'ave my braces bust and be choked; not if I knows it and not by 'Im. Wait till I set a jolly good flint a flyin' at the back o' 'is jolly old 'ed some day! Now look t'other side the harch; not the side where Jarsper's door is; t'other side."

"I see."

"A little way in, o' that side, there's a low door, down two steps. That's Topeseses with 'is name on a hoval plate."

"Good. See here," said Mr. Datchery, producing a shilling. "You owe me half of this."

"Yer lie; I don't owe yer nothing; I never seen yer."

"I tell you you owe me half of this, because I have no sixpence in my pocket. So the next time you meet me you shall do something else for me, to pay me."

"All right, give us 'old."

"What is your name, and where do you live?"

"Deputy. Travellers' Twopenny, 'cross the green."

The boy instantly darted off with the shilling, lest Mr. Datchery should repent, but stopped at a safe distance, on the happy chance of his being uneasy in his mind about it, to goad him with a demon dance expressive of its irrevocability.

Mr. Datchery taking off his hat to give that shock of white hair of his another shake, seemed quite resigned, and betook himself whither he had been directed.

Mr. Tope's official dwelling, communicating by an upper stair with Mr. Jasper's (hence Mrs. Tope's attendance on that gentleman), was of very modest proportions, and partook of the character of a cool dungeon. Its ancient walls were massive, and its rooms rather seemed to have been dug out of them than to have been designed beforehand with any reference to them. The main door opened at once on a chamber of no describable shape, with a groined roof, which in its turn opened on another chamber of no describable shape with another groined roof. Their windows small and in the thickness of the walls, these two chambers, close as to their atmosphere and swarthy as to their illumination by natural light, were the apartments which Mrs. Tope had so long offered to an unappreciative city. Mr. Datchery, however, was more appreciative. He found that if he sat with the main door open he would enjoy the passing society of all comers to and fro by the gateway, and would have light enough. He found that if Mr. and Mrs. Tope, living overhead, used for their own egress and ingress a little side stair that came plump into the Precincts by a door opening outward, to the surprise and inconvenience of a limited public of pedestrians in a narrow way, he would be alone, as in a separate residence. He found the rent moderate, and everything as quaintly inconvenient as he could desire. He agreed therefore to take the lodging then and there, and money down, possession to be had next evening on condition that reference was permitted him to Mr. Jasper as occupying the Gate House, of which, on the other side of the gateway, the Verger's hole in the wall was an appanage or subsidiary part.

The poor dear gentleman was very solitary and very sad, Mrs. Tope said, but she had no doubt he would "speak for her." Perhaps Mr. Datchery had heard something of what had occurred there last winter?

Mr. Datchery had as confused a knowledge of the event in question, on trying to recall it, as he well could have. He begged Mrs. Tope's pardon when she found it incumbent on her to correct him in every detail of his summary of the facts, but pleaded that he was merely a single buffer getting through life upon his means as idly as he could, and that so many people were so constantly making away with so many other people, as to render it difficult for a buffer of an easy temper to preserve the circumstances of the several cases unmixed in his mind.

Mr. Jasper proving willing to speak for Mrs. Tope, Mr. Datchery, who had sent up his card, was invited to ascend the postern staircase. The Mayor was there, Mrs. Tope said; but he was not to be regarded in the light of company, as he and Mr. Jasper were great friends.

"I beg pardon," said Mr. Datchery, making a leg with his hat under his arm, as he addressed himself equally to both gentlemen; "a selfish precaution on my part and not personally interesting to anybody but myself. But as a buffer living on his means, and having an idea of doing it in this lovely place in peace and quiet, for remaining span of life, beg to ask if the Tope family are quite respectable?"

Mr. Jasper could answer for that without the slightest hesitation.

"That is enough, sir," said Mr. Datchery.

"My friend, the Mayor," added Mr. Jasper, presenting Mr. Datchery with a courtly motion of his hand towards that potentate, "whose recommendation is actually much more important to a stranger than that of an obscure person like myself, will testify in their behalf, I am sure."

"The Worshipful the Mayor," said Mr. Datchery, with a low bow, "places me under an infinite obligation."

"Very good people, sir, Mr. and Mrs. Tope," said Mr. Sapsea, with condescension. "Very good opinions. Very well behaved. Very respectful. Much approved by the Dean and Chapter."

"The Worshipful the Mayor gives them a character," said Mr. Datchery, "of which they may indeed be proud. I would ask his Honor (if I might be permitted) whether there are not many objects of great interest in the city which is under his beneficent sway?"

"We are, sir," returned Mr. Sapsea, "an ancient city, and an ecclesiastical city. We are a constitutional city, as it becomes such a city to be, and we uphold and maintain our glorious privileges."

"His Honor," said Mr. Datchery, bowing, "inspires me with a desire to know more of the city, and confirms me in my inclination to end my days in the city."

"Retired from the Army, sir?" suggested Mr. Sapsea.

"His Honor the Mayor does me too much credit," returned Mr. Datchery.

"Navy, sir?" suggested Mr. Sapsea.

"Again," repeated Mr. Datchery, "His Honor the Mayor does me too much credit."

"Diplomacy is a fine profession," said Mr. Sapsea, as a general remark.

"There, I confess, His Honor the Mayor is too many for me," said Mr. Datchery, with an ingenuous smile and bow; "even a diplomatic bird must fall to such a gun."

Now, this was very soothing. Here was a gentleman of a great — not to say a grand — address, accustomed to rank and dignity, really setting a fine example how to behave to a Mayor. There was something in that third-person style of being spoken to, that Mr. Sapsea found particularly recognizant of his merits and position.

"But I crave pardon," said Mr. Datchery. "His Honor the Mayor will bear with me, if for a moment I have been deluded into occupying his time, and have forgotten the humble claims upon my own, of my hotel, the Crozier."

"Not at all, sir," said Mr. Sapsea. "I am returning home, and if you would like to take the exterior of our Cathedral in your way, I shall be glad to point it out."

"His Honor the Mayor," said Mr. Datchery, "is more than kind and gracious."

As Mr. Datchery, when he had made his acknowledgments to Mr. Jasper, could not be induced to go out of

the room before the Worshipful, the Worshipful led the way down stairs, Mr. Datchery following with his hat under his arm, and his shock of white hair streaming in the evening breeze.

"Might I ask His Honor," said Mr. Datchery, "whether that gentleman we have just left is the gentleman of whom I have heard in the neighborhood as being much afflicted by the loss of a nephew, and concentrating his life on avenging the loss?"

"That is the gentleman. John Jasper, sir."

"Would His Honor allow me to inquire whether there are strong suspicions of any one?"

"More than suspicions, sir," returned Mr. Sapsea, "all but certainties."

"Only think now!" cried Mr. Datchery.

"But proof, sir, proof, must be built up, stone by stone," said the Mayor. "As I say, the end crowns the work. It is not enough that Justice should be morally certain; she must be immorally certain — legally, that is."

"His Honor," said Mr. Datchery, "reminds me of the nature of the law. Immoral. How true!"

"As I say, sir," pompously went on the Mayor, "the arm of the law is a strong arm, and a long arm. That is the way I put it. A strong arm and a long arm."

"How forcible! — And yet, again, how true!" murmured Mr. Datchery.

"And without betraying what I call the secrets of the prison-house," said Mr. Sapsea; "the secrets of the prison-house is the term I used on the bench."

"And what other term than His Honor's would express it!" said Mr. Datchery.

"Without, I say, betraying them, I predict to you, knowing the iron will of the gentleman we have just left (I take the bold step of calling it iron, on account of its strength), that in this case the long arm will reach, and the strong arm will strike. — This is our Cathedral, sir. The best judges are pleased to admire it, and the best among our townsmen own to being a little vain of it."

All this time Mr. Datchery had walked with his hat under his arm, and his white hair streaming. He had an odd momentary appearance upon him of having forgotten

his hat, when Mr. Sapsea now touched it ; and he clapped his hand up to his head as if with some vague expectation of finding another hat upon it.

"Pray be covered, sir," entreated Mr. Sapsea ; magnificently implying, "I shall not mind it, I assure you."

"His Honor is very good, but I do it for coolness," said Mr. Datchery.

Then Mr. Datchery admired the Cathedral, and Mr. Sapsea pointed it out as if he himself had invented and built it ; there were a few details indeed of which he did not approve, but those he glossed over, as if the workmen had made mistakes in his absence. The Cathedral disposed of, he led the way by the churchyard, and stopped to extol the beauty of the evening — by chance — in the immediate vicinity of Mrs. Sapsea's epitaph.

"And by the by," said Mr. Sapsea, appearing to descend from an elevation to remember it all of a sudden, like Apollo shooting down from Olympus to pick up his forgotten lyre, "*that* is one of our small lions. The partiality of our people has made it so, and strangers have been seen taking a copy of it now and then. I am not a judge of it myself, for it is a little work of my own. But it was troublesome to turn, sir ; I may say, difficult to turn with elegance."

Mr. Datchery became so ecstatic over Mr. Sapsea's composition that, in spite of his intention to end his days in Cloisterham, and therefore his probably having in reserve many opportunities of copying it, he would have transcribed it into his pocket-book on the spot, but for the slouching towards them of its material producer and perpetuator, Durdles, whom Mr. Sapsea hailed, not sorry to show him a bright example of behavior to superiors.

"Ah, Durdles ! This is the mason, sir ; one of our Cloisterham worthies ; everybody here knows Durdles. Mr. Datchery, Durdles ; a gentleman who is going to settle here."

"I would n't do it if I was him," growled Durdles. "We're a heavy lot."

"You surely don't speak for yourself, Mr. Durdles," returned Mr. Datchery, "any more than for His Honor."

"Who's His Honor ?" demanded Durdles.

"His Honor the Mayor."

"I never was brought afore him," said Durdles, with anything but the look of a loyal subject of the mayoralty, "and it 'll be time enough for me to Honor him when I am. Until which, and when, and where :

'Mister Sapsea is his name,
England is his nation,
Cloisterham's his dwelling-place,
Aukshneer's his occupation.' "

Here Deputy (preceded by a flying oyster-shell) appeared upon the scene, and requested to have the sum of threepence instantly "chucked" to him by Mr. Durdles, whom he had been vainly seeking up and down, as lawful wages overdue. While that gentleman, with his bundle under his arm, slowly found and counted out the money, Mr. Sapsea informed the new settler of Durdles's habits, pursuits, abode, and reputation. "I suppose a curious stranger might come to see you, and your works, Mr. Durdles, at any odd time?" said Mr. Datchery upon that.

"Any gentleman is welcome to come and see me any evening if he brings liquor for two with him," returned Durdles, with a penny between his teeth and certain half-pence in his hands. "Or if he likes to make it twice two, he 'll be doubly welcome."

"I shall come. — Master Deputy, what do you owe me?"

"A job."

"Mind you pay me honestly with the job of showing me Mr. Durdles's house when I want to go there."

Deputy, with a piercing broadside of whistle through the whole gap in his mouth, as a receipt in full for all arrears, vanished

The Worshipful and the Worshipper then passed on together until they parted, with many ceremonies, at the Worshipful's door; even then, the Worshipper carried his hat under his arm, and gave his streaming white hair to the breeze.

Said Mr. Datchery to himself that night, as he looked at his white hair in the gas-lighted looking-glass over the coffee-room chimney-piece at the Crozier, and shook it out: "For a single buffer, of an easy temper, living idly on his means, I have had a rather busy afternoon!"

CHAPTER XIX.

SHADOW ON THE SUNDIAL.

AGAIN Miss Twinkleton has delivered her valedictory address, with the accompaniments of white wine and pound cake, and again the young ladies have departed to their several homes. Helena Landless has left the Nuns' House to attend her brother's fortunes, and pretty Rosa is alone.

Cloisterham is so bright and sunny in these summer days that the Cathedral and the monastery-ruin show as if their strong walls were transparent. A soft glow seems to shine from within them, rather than upon them from without, such is their mellowness as they look forth on the hot corn-fields and the smoking roads that distantly wind among them. The Cloisterham gardens blush with ripening fruit. Time was when travel-stained pilgrims rode in clattering parties through the city's welcome shades; time is when wayfarers, leading a gypsy life between haymaking time and harvest, and looking as if they were just made of the dust of the earth, so very dusty are they, lounge about on cool doorsteps, trying to mend their unmendable shoes, or giving them to the city kennels as a hopeless job, and seeking others in the bundles that they carry, along with their yet unused sickles swathed in bands of straw. At all the more public pumps there is much cooling of bare feet, together with much bubbling and gurgling of drinking with hand to spout on the part of these Bedouins; the Cloisterham police meanwhile looking askant from their beats with suspicion, and manifest impatience that the intruders should depart from within the civic bounds, and once more fry themselves on the simmering high-roads.

On the afternoon of such a day, when the last Cathedral service is done, and when that side of the High

Street on which the Nuns' House stands is in grateful shade, save where its quaint old garden opens to the west between the boughs of trees, a servant informs Rosa, to her terror, that Mr. Jasper desires to see her.

If he had chosen his time for finding her at a disadvantage, he could have done no better. Perhaps he has chosen it. Helena Landless is gone, Mrs. Tisher is absent on leave, Miss Twinkleton (in her amateur state of existence) has contributed herself and a veal-pie to a picnic.

"O, why, why, why did you say I was at home!" cries Rosa, helplessly.

The maid replies that Mr. Jasper never asked the question. That he said he knew she was at home, and begged she might be told that he asked to see her.

"What shall I do? what shall I do?" thinks Rosa, clasping her hands.

Possessed by a kind of desperation, she adds in the next breath that she will come to Mr. Jasper in the garden. She shudders at the thought of being shut up with him in the house; but many of its windows command the garden, and she can be seen as well as heard there, and can shriek in the free air and run away. Such is the wild idea that flutters through her mind.

She has never seen him since the fatal night, except when she was questioned before the Mayor, and then he was present in gloomy watchfulness, as representing his lost nephew and burning to avenge him. She hangs her garden-hat on her arm, and goes out. The moment she sees him from the porch, leaning on the sundial, the old horrible feeling of being compelled by him asserts its hold upon her. She feels that she would even then go back, but that he draws her feet towards him. She cannot resist, and sits down, with her head bent, on the garden-seat beside the sundial. She cannot look up at him for abhorrence, but she has perceived that he is dressed in deep mourning. So is she. It was not so at first; but the lost has long been given up, and mourned for, as dead.

He would begin by touching her hand. She feels the intention, and draws her hand back. His eyes are then fixed upon her, she knows, though her own see nothing but the grass.

"I have been waiting," he begins, "for some time, to be summoned back to my duty near you."

After several times forming her lips, which she knows he is closely watching, into the shape of some other hesitating reply, and then into none, she answers, "Duty, sir?"

"The duty of teaching you, serving you as your faithful music-master."

"I have left off that study."

"Not left off, I think. Discontinued. I was told by your guardian that you discontinued it under the shock that we have all felt so acutely. When will you resume?"

"Never, sir."

"Never? You could have done no more if you had loved my dear boy."

"I did love him!" cries Rosa, with a flash of anger.

"Yes; but not quite—not quite in the right way, shall I say! Not in the intended and expected way. Much as my dear boy was, unhappily, too self-conscious and self-satisfied (I'll draw no parallel between him and you in that respect) to love as he should have loved, or as any one in his place would have loved; must have loved!"

She sits in the same still attitude, but shrinking a little more.

"Then, to be told that you discontinued your study with me, was to be politely told that you abandoned it altogether?" he suggested.

"Yes," says Rosa, with sudden spirit. "The politeness was my guardian's, not mine. I told him that I was resolved to leave off, and that I was determined to stand by my resolution."

"And you still are?"

"I still am, sir. And I beg not to be questioned any more about it. At all events, I will not answer any more; I have that in my power."

She is so conscious of his looking at her with a gloating admiration of the touch of anger on her, and the fire and animation it brings with it, that even as her spirit rises, it falls again, and she struggles with a sense of shame, affront, and fear, much as she did that night at the piano.

"I will not question you any more, since you object to it so much ; I will confess."

"I do not wish to hear you, sir," cries Rosa, rising.

This time he does touch her with his outstretched hand. In shrinking from it, she shrinks into her seat again.

"We must sometimes act in opposition to our wishes," he tells her in a low voice. "You must do so now, or do more harm to others than you can ever set right."

"What harm?"

"Presently, presently. You question *me*, you see, and surely that's not fair when you forbid me to question you. Nevertheless, I will answer the question presently. Dearest Rosa! Charming Rosa!"

She starts up again.

This time he does not touch her. But his face looks so wicked and menacing, as he stands leaning against the sundial, — setting, as it were, his black mark upon the very face of day, — that her flight is arrested by horror as she looks at him.

"I do not forget how many windows command a view of us," he says, glancing towards them. "I will not touch you again, I will come no nearer to you than I am. Sit down, and there will be no mighty wonder in your music-master's leaning idly against a pedestal and speaking with you, remembering all that has happened and our shares in it. Sit down, my beloved."

She would have gone once more, — was all but gone, — and once more his face darkly threatening what would follow if she went, has stopped her. Looking at him with the expression of the instant frozen on her face, she sits down on the seat again.

"Rosa, even when my dear boy was affianced to you, I loved you madly ; even when I thought his happiness in having you for his wife was certain, I loved you madly ; even when I strove to make him more ardently devoted to you, I loved you madly ; even when he gave me the picture of your lovely face so carelessly traduced by him, which I feigned to hang always in my sight for his sake, but worshipped in torment for years, I loved you madly. In the distasteful work of the day, in the wakeful misery of the night, girded by sordid realities,

or wandering through Paradises and Hells of visions into which I rushed, carrying your image in my arms, I loved you madly."

If anything could make his words more hideous to her than they are in themselves, it would be the contrast between the violence of his look and delivery, and the composure of his assumed attitude.

"I endured it all in silence. So long as you were his, or so long as I supposed you to be his, I hid my secret loyally. Did I not?"

This lie, so gross, while the mere words in which it is told are so true, is more than Rosa can endure. She answers, with kindling indignation, "You were as false throughout, sir, as you are now. You were false to him, daily and hourly. You know that you made my life unhappy by your pursuit of me. You know that you made me afraid to open his generous eyes, and that you forced me, for his own trusting, good, good sake, to keep the truth from him, that you were a bad, bad man!"

His preservation of his easy attitude rendering his working features and his convulsive hands absolutely diabolical, he returns, with a fierce extreme of admiration:—

"How beautiful you are! You are more beautiful in anger than in repose. I don't ask you for your love; give me yourself and your hatred; give me yourself and that pretty rage; give me yourself and that enchanting scorn; it will be enough for me."

Impatient tears rise to the eyes of the trembling little beauty, and her face flames; but as she again rises to leave him in indignation, and seek protection within the house, he stretches out his hand towards the porch, as though he invited her to enter it.

"I told you, you rare charmer, you sweet witch, that you must stay and hear me, or do more harm than can ever be undone. You asked me what harm. Stay, and I will tell you. Go, and I will do it!"

Again Rosa quails before his threatening face, though innocent of its meaning, and she remains. Her panting breathing comes and goes as if it would choke her; but with a repressive hand upon her bosom, she remains.

"I have made my confession that my love is mad. It

is so mad that, had the ties between me and my dear lost boy been one silken thread less strong, I might have swept even him from your side when you favored him."

A film comes over the eyes she raises for an instant, as though he had turned her faint.

"Even him," he repeats. "Yes, even him! Rosa, you see me and you hear me. Judge for yourself whether any other admirer shall love you and live, whose life is in my hand."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean to show you how mad my love is. It was hawked through the late inquiries by Mr. Crisparkle that young Landless had confessed to him that he was a rival of my lost boy. That is an inexpiable offence in my eyes. The same Mr. Crisparkle knows under my hand that I have devoted myself to the murderer's discovery and destruction, be he whom he might, and that I determined to discuss the mystery with no one until I should hold the clew in which to entangle the murderer as in a net. I have since worked patiently to wind and wind it round him; and it is slowly winding as I speak."

"Your belief, if you believe in the criminality of Mr. Landless, is not Mr. Crisparkle's belief, and he is a good man," Rosa retorts.

"My belief is my own; and I reserve it, worshipped of my soul! Circumstances may accumulate so strongly *even against an innocent man*, that, directed, sharpened, and pointed, they may slay him. One wanting link discovered by perseverance against a guilty man proves his guilt, however slight its evidence before, and he dies. Young Landless stands in deadly peril either way."

"If you really suppose," Rosa pleads with him, turning paler, "that I favor Mr. Landless, or that Mr. Landless has ever in any way addressed himself to me, you are wrong."

He puts that from him with a slighting action of his hand and a curled lip.

"I was going to show you how madly I love you. More madly now than ever, for I am willing to renounce the second object that has arisen in my life to divide it with you; and henceforth to have no object in existence



but you only. Miss Landless has become your bosom friend. You care for her peace of mind ? ”

“ I love her dearly. ”

“ You care for her good name ? ”

“ I have said, sir, I love her dearly. ”

“ I am unconsciously, ” he observes, with a smile, as he folds his hands upon the sundial and leans his chin upon them, so that his talk would seem from the windows (faces occasionally come and go there) to be of the airiest and playfullest, — “ I am unconsciously giving offence by questioning again. I will simply make statements, therefore, and not put questions. You do care for your bosom friend’s good name, and you do care for her peace of mind. Then remove the shadow of the gallows from her, dear one ! ”

“ You dare propose to me to — ”

“ Darling, I dare propose to you. Stop there. If it be bad to idolize you, I am the worst of men ; if it be good, I am the best. My love for you is above all other love, and my truth to you is above all other truth. Let me have hope and favor, and I am a forsworn man for your sake. ”

Rosa puts her hands to her temples, and, pushing back her hair, looks wildly and abhorrently at him, as though she were trying to piece together what it is his deep purpose to present to her only in fragments.

“ Reckon up nothing at this moment, angel, but the sacrifices that I lay at those dear feet, which I could fall down among the vilest ashes and kiss, and put upon my head as a poor savage might. There is my fidelity to my dear boy after death. Tread upon it ! ”

With an action of his hands, as though he cast down something precious.

“ There is the inexpressible offence against my adoration of you. Spurn it ! ”

With a similar action.

“ There are my labors in the cause of a just vengeance for six toiling months. Crush them ! ”

With another repetition of the action.

“ There is my past and my present wasted life. There is the desolation of my heart and my soul. There is my peace ; there is my despair. Stamp them into the

dust, so that you take me, were it even mortally hating me ! ”

The frightful vehemence of the man, now reaching its full height, so additionally terrifies her as to break the spell that has held her to the spot. She swiftly moves towards the porch ; but in an instant he is at her side, and speaking in her ear.

“ Rosa, I am self-repressed again. I am walking calmly beside you to the house. I shall wait for some encouragement and hope. I shall not strike too soon. Give me a sign that you attend to me.”

She slightly and constrainedly moves her hand.

“ Not a word of this to any one, or it will bring down the blow, as certainly as night follows day. Another sign that you attend to me.”

She moves her hand once more.

“ I love you, love you, love you. If you were to cast me off now — but you will not — you would never be rid of me. No one should come between us. I would pursue you to the death.”

The handmaid coming out to open the gate for him, he quietly pulls off his hat as a parting salute, and goes away with no greater show of agitation than is visible in the effigy of Mr. Sapsea’s father opposite. Rosa faints in going up stairs, and is carefully carried to her room, and laid down on her bed. A thunder-storm is coming on, the maids say, and the hot and stifling air has upset the pretty dear ; no wonder ; they have felt their own knees all of a tremble all day long.

CHAPTER XX.

A FLIGHT.

ROSA no sooner came to herself than the whole of the late interview was before her. It even seemed as if it had pursued her into her insensibility, and she had not had a moment's unconsciousness of it. What to do, she was at a frightened loss to know: the only one clear thought in her mind was, that she must fly from this terrible man.

But where could she take refuge, and how could she go? She had never breathed her dread of him to any one but Helena. If she went to Helena, and told her what had passed, that very act might bring down the irreparable mischief that he threatened he had the power, and that she knew he had the will, to do. The more fearful he appeared to her excited memory and imagination, the more alarming her responsibility appeared: seeing that a slight mistake on her part, either in action or delay, might let his malevolence loose on Helena's brother.

Rosa's mind throughout the last six months had been stormily confused. A half-formed, wholly unexpressed suspicion tossed in it, now heaving itself up, and now sinking into the deep; now gaining palpability, and now losing it. His self-absorption in his nephew when he was alive, and his unceasing pursuit of the inquiry how he came by his death, if he were dead, were themes so rife in the place, that no one appeared able to suspect the possibility of foul play at his hands. She had asked herself the question, "Am I so wicked in my thoughts as to conceive a wickedness that others cannot imagine?" Then she had considered, Did the suspicion come of her previous recoiling from him before the fact. And if so, was not that a proof of its baselessness?

Then she had reflected, "What motive could he have, according to my accusation?" She was ashamed to answer in her mind, "The motive of gaining *me!*" And covered her face, as if the lightest shadow of the idea of founding murder on such an idle vanity were a crime almost as great.

She ran over in her mind again all that he had said by the sundial in the garden. He had persisted in treating the disappearance as murder, consistently with his whole public course since the finding of the watch and shirt-pin. If he were afraid of the crime being traced out, would he not rather encourage the idea of a voluntary disappearance? He had even declared that if the ties between him and his nephew had been less strong, he might have swept "even him" away from her side. Was that like his having really done so? He had spoken of laying his six months' labors in the cause of a just vengeance at her feet. Would he have done that, with that violence of passion, if they were a pretence? Would he have ranged them with his desolate heart and soul, his wasted life, his peace, and his despair? The very first sacrifice that he represented himself as making for her was his fidelity to his dear boy after death. Surely these facts were strong against a fancy that scarcely dared to hint itself. And yet he was so terrible a man! In short, the poor girl (for what could she know of the criminal intellect, which its own professed students perpetually misread, because they persist in trying to reconcile it with the average intellect of average men, instead of identifying it as a horrible wonder apart), could get by no road to any other conclusion than that he *was* a terrible man, and must be fled from.

She had been Helena's stay and comfort during the whole time. She had constantly assured her of her full belief in her brother's innocence, and of her sympathy with him in his misery. But she had never seen him since the disappearance, nor had Helena ever spoken one word of his avowal to Mr. Crisparkle in regard of Rosa, though as a part of the interest of the case it was well known far and wide. He was Helena's unfortunate brother, to her, and nothing more. The assurance she had given her odious suitor was strictly true, though it

would have been better (she considered now) if she could have restrained herself from so giving it. Afraid of him as the bright and delicate little creature was, her spirit swelled at the thought of his knowing it from her own lips.

But where was she to go? Anywhere beyond his reach, was no reply to the question. Somewhere must be thought of. She determined to go to her guardian, and to go immediately. The feeling she had imparted to Helena on the night of their first confidence was so strong upon her — the feeling of not being safe from him, and of the solid walls of the old convent being powerless to keep out his ghostly following of her — that no reasoning of her own could calm her terrors. The fascination of repulsion had been upon her so long, and now culminated so darkly, that she felt as if he had power to bind her by a spell. Glancing out at window, even now, as she rose to dress, the sight of the sundial on which he had leaned when he declared himself turned her cold, and made her shrink from it, as though he had invested it with some awful quality from his own nature.

She wrote a hurried note to Miss Twinkleton, saying that she had sudden reason for wishing to see her guardian promptly, and had gone to him; also, entreating the good lady not to be uneasy, for all was well with her. She hurried a few quite useless articles into a very little bag, left the note in a conspicuous place, and went out, softly closing the gate after her.

It was the first time she had ever been even in Cloisterham High Street alone. But knowing all its ways and windings very well, she hurried straight to the corner from which the omnibus departed. It was at that very moment going off.

“Stop and take me, if you please, Joe. I am obliged to go to London.”

In less than another minute she was on her road to the railway, under Joe's protection. Joe waited on her when she got there, put her safely into the railway carriage, and handed in the very little bag after her, as though it were some enormous trunk, hundredweights heavy, which she must on no account endeavor to lift.

"Can you go round when you get back, and tell Miss Twinkleton that you saw me safely off, Joe?"

"It shall be done, Miss."

"With my love, please, Joe."

"Yes, Miss, — and I would n't mind having it myself!" But Joe did not articulate the last clause; only thought it.

Now that she was whirling away for London in real earnest, Rosa was at leisure to resume the thoughts which her personal hurry had checked. The indignant thought that his declaration of love soiled her; that she could only be cleansed from the stain of its impurity by appealing to the honest and true; supported her for a time against her fears, and confirmed her in her hasty resolution. But as the evening grew darker and darker, and the great city impended nearer and nearer, the doubts usual in such cases began to arise. Whether this was not a wild proceeding after all; how Mr. Grewgious might regard it; whether she should find him at the journey's end; how she would act if he were absent; what might become of her, alone, in a place so strange and crowded; how if she had but waited and taken counsel first; whether, if she could now go back, she would not do it thankfully: a multitude of such uneasy speculations disturbed her, more and more as they accumulated. At length the train came into London over the housetops; and down below lay the gritty streets with their yet unneeded lamps aglow, on a hot light summer night.

"Hiram Grewgious, Esquire, Staple Inn, London." This was all Rosa knew of her destination; but it was enough to send her rattling away again in a cab, through deserts of gritty streets, where many people crowded at the corners of courts and byways to get some air, and where many other people walked with a miserably monotonous noise of shuffling feet on hot paving-stones, and where all the people and all their surroundings were so gritty and so shabby.

There was music playing here and there, but it did not enliven the case. No barrel-organ mended the matter, and no big drum beat dull care away. Like the chapel bells that were also going here and there, they only seemed to evoke echoes from brick surfaces, and dust

from everything. As to the flat wind instruments, they seemed to have cracked their hearts and souls in pining for the country.

Her jingling conveyance stopped at last at a fast-closed gateway which appeared to belong to somebody who had gone to bed very early, and was much afraid of house-breakers ; Rosa, discharging her conveyance, timidly knocked at this gateway, and was let in, very little bag and all, by a watchman.

“ Does Mr. Grewgious live here ? ”

“ Mr. Grewgious lives there, Miss,” said the watchman, pointing farther in.

So Rosa went farther in, and, when the clocks were striking ten, stood on P. J. T.’s doorsteps, wondering what P. J. T. had done with his street door.

Guided by the painted name of Mr. Grewgious, she went up stairs and softly tapped and tapped several times. But no one answering, and Mr. Grewgious’s door-handle yielding to her touch, she went in, and saw her guardian sitting on a window-seat at an open window, with a shaded lamp placed far from him on a table in a corner.

Rosa drew nearer to him in the twilight of the room. He saw her, and he said in an undertone, “ Good Heaven ! ”

Rosa fell upon his neck, with tears, and then he said, returning her embrace, —

“ My child, my child ! I thought you were your mother ! ”

“ But what, what, what,” he added, soothingly, “ has happened ? My dear, what has brought you here ? Who has brought you here ? ”

“ No one. I came alone.”

“ Lord bless me ! ” ejaculated Mr. Grewgious. “ Came alone ! Why did n’t you write to me to come and fetch you ? ”

“ I had no time. I took a sudden resolution. Poor, poor Eddy ! ”

“ Ah, poor fellow, poor fellow ! ”

“ His uncle has made love to me. I cannot bear it,” said Rosa, at once with a burst of tears, and a stamp of her little foot ; “ I shudder with horror of him, and I

have come to you to protect me and all of us from him, if you will?"

"I will!" cried Mr. Grewgious, with a sudden rush of amazing energy. "Damn him!"

"Confound his politics,
Frustrate his knavish tricks!
On Thee his hopes to fix?
Damn him again!"

After this most extraordinary outburst, Mr. Grewgious, quite beside himself, plunged about the room, to all appearance undecided whether he was in a fit of loyal enthusiasm, or combative denunciation.

He stopped and said, wiping his face, "I beg your pardon, my dear, but you will be glad to know I feel better. Tell me no more just now, or I might do it again. You must be refreshed and cheered. What did you take last? Was it breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea, or supper? And what will you take next? Shall it be breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea, or supper?"

The respectful tenderness with which, on one knee before her, he helped her to remove her hat, and disentangle her pretty hair from it, was quite a chivalrous sight. Yet who, knowing him only on the surface, would have expected chivalry—and of the true sort, too: not the spurious—from Mr. Grewgious?

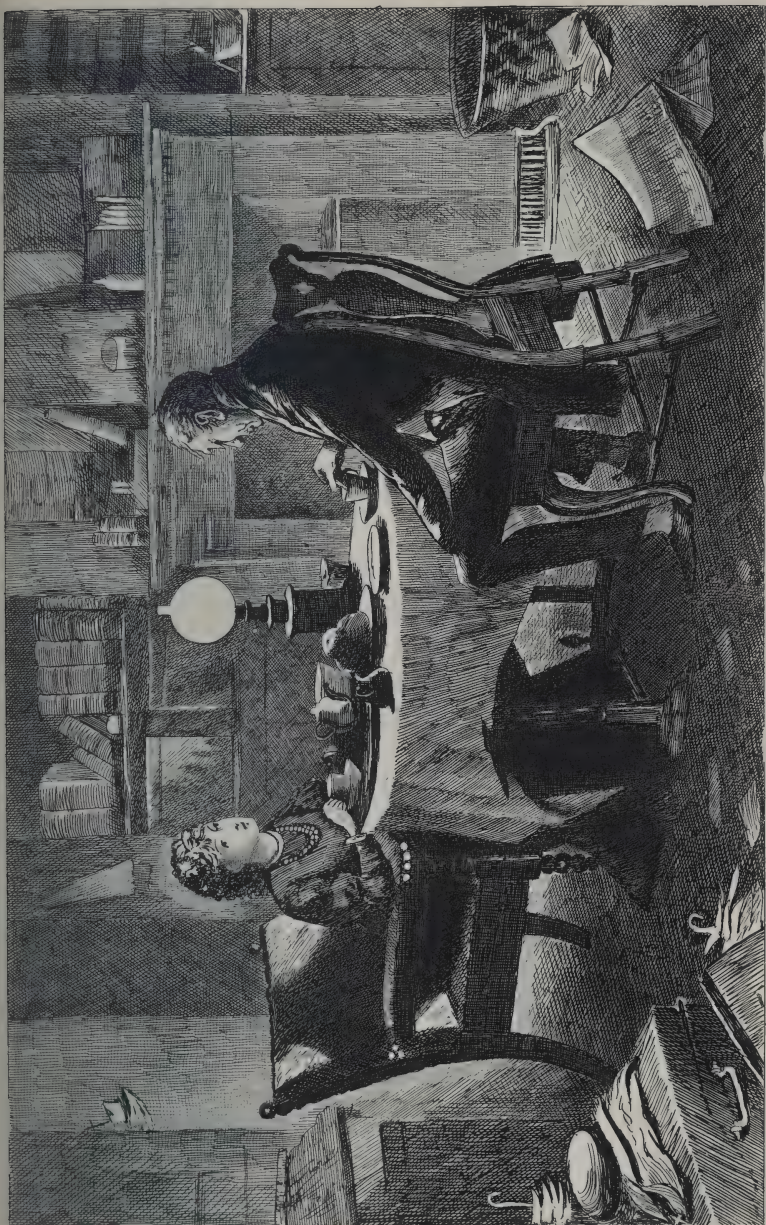
"Your rest too must be provided for," he went on, "and you shall have the prettiest chamber in Furnival's. Your toilet must be provided for, and you shall have everything that an unlimited head-chambermaid—by which expression I mean a head-chambermaid not limited as to outlay—can procure. Is that a bag?" He looked hard at it; sooth to say, it required hard looking at to be seen at all in a dimly lighted room: "and is it your property, my dear?"

"Yes, sir. I brought it with me."

"It is not an extensive bag," said Mr. Grewgious, candidly, "though admirably calculated to contain a day's provision for a canary-bird. Perhaps you brought a canary-bird?"

Rosa smiled, and shook her head.

"If you had he should have been made welcome," said Mr. Grewgious, "and I think he would have been pleased



to be hung upon a nail outside and pit himself against our Staple sparrows ; whose execution must be admitted to be not quite equal to their intention. Which is the case with so many of us ! You did n't say what meal, my dear. Have a nice jumble of all meals."

Rosa thanked him, but said she could only take a cup of tea. Mr. Grewgious, after several times running out, and in again, to mention such supplementary items as marmalade, eggs, water-cresses, salted fish, and frizzled ham, ran across to Furnival's without his hat, to give his various directions. And soon afterwards they were realized in practice, and the board was spread.

"Lord bless my soul !" cried Mr. Grewgious, putting the lamp upon it, and taking his seat opposite Rosa, "what a new sensation for a poor old Angular bachelor, to be sure !"

Rosa's expressive little eyebrows asked him what he meant ?

"The sensation of having a sweet young presence in the place that whitewashes it, paints it, papers it, decorates it with gilding, and makes it Glorious," said Mr. Grewgious. "Ah me ! Ah me !"

As there was something mournful in his sigh, Rosa, in touching him with his teacup ventured to touch him with her small hand too.

"Thank you, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious. "Ahem ! Let's talk."

"Do you always live here, sir ?" asked Rosa.

"Yes, my dear."

"And always alone ?"

"Always alone ; except that I have daily company in a gentleman by the name of Bazzard ; my clerk."

"He does n't live here ?"

"No, he goes his ways after office hours. In fact, he is off duty here, altogether, just at present ; and a Firm down stairs, with which I have business relations, lend me a substitute. But it would be extremely difficult to replace Mr. Bazzard."

"He must be very fond of you," said Rosa.

"He bears up against it with commendable fortitude if he is," returned Mr. Grewgious, after considering the

matter. "But I doubt if he is. Not particularly so. You see, he is discontented, poor fellow."

"Why is n't he contented?" was the natural inquiry.

"Misplaced," said Mr. Grewgious, with great mystery.

Rosa's eyebrows resumed their inquisitive and perplexed expression.

"So misplaced," Mr. Grewgious went on, "that I feel constantly apologetic towards him. And he feels (though he does n't mention it) that I have reason to be."

Mr. Grewgious had by this time grown so very mysterious, that Rosa did not know how to go on. While she was thinking about it, Mr. Grewgious suddenly jerked out of himself for the second time:—

"Let's talk. We were speaking of Mr. Bazzard. It's a secret, and moreover it is Mr. Bazzard's secret; but the sweet presence at my table makes me so unusually expansive, that I feel I must impart it in inviolable confidence. What do you think Mr. Bazzard has done?"

"O dear!" cried Rosa, drawing her chair a little nearer, and her mind reverting to Jasper, "nothing dreadful, I hope?"

"He has written a play," said Mr. Grewgious, in a solemn whisper. "A tragedy."

Rosa seemed much relieved.

"And nobody," pursued Mr. Grewgious, in the same tone, "will hear, on any account whatever, of bringing it out."

Rosa looked reflective, and nodded her head slowly; as who should say, "Such things are, and why are they!"

"Now, you know," said Mr. Grewgious, "*I* could n't write a play."

"Not a bad one, sir?" asked Rosa, innocently, with her eyebrows again in action.

"No. If I was under sentence of decapitation, and was about to be instantly decapitated, and an express arrived with a pardon for the condemned convict Grewgious if he wrote a play, I should be under the necessity of resuming the block and begging the executioner to proceed to extremities, — meaning," said Mr. Grewgious, passing his hand under his chin, "the singular number, and this extremity."

Rosa appeared to consider what she would do if the awkward supposititious case were hers.

"Consequently," said Mr. Grewgious, "Mr. Bazzard would have a sense of my inferiority to himself under any circumstances; but when I am his master, you know, the case is greatly aggravated."

Mr. Grewgious shook his head seriously, as if he felt the offence to be a little too much, though of his own committing.

"How came you to be his master, sir?" asked Rosa.

"A question that naturally follows," said Mr. Grewgious. "Let's talk. Mr. Bazzard's father, being a Norfolk farmer, would have furiously laid about him with a flail, a pitchfork, and every agricultural implement available for assaulting purposes, on the slightest hint of his son's having written a play. So the son, bringing to me the father's rent (which I receive), imparted his secret, and pointed out that he was determined to pursue his genius, and that it would put him in peril of starvation, and that he was not formed for it."

"For pursuing his genius, sir?"

"No, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious, "for starvation. It was impossible to deny the position that Mr. Bazzard was not formed to be starved, and Mr. Bazzard then pointed out that it was desirable that I should stand between him and a fate so perfectly unsuited to his formation. In that way Mr. Bazzard became my clerk, and he feels it very much."

"I am glad he is grateful," said Rosa.

"I did n't quite mean that, my dear. I mean that he feels the degradation. There are some other geniuses that Mr. Bazzard has become acquainted with, who have also written tragedies, which likewise nobody will on any account whatever hear of bringing out, and these choice spirits dedicate their plays to one another in a highly panegyrical manner. Mr. Bazzard has been the subject of one of these dedications. Now, you know, *I* never had a play dedicated to *me*!"

Rosa looked at him as if she would have liked him to be the recipient of a thousand dedications.

"Which again, naturally, rubs against the grain of Mr. Bazzard," said Mr. Grewgious. "He is very short

with me sometimes, and then I feel that he is meditating, 'This blockhead is my master! A fellow who could n't write a tragedy on pain of death, and who will never have one dedicated to him with the most complimentary congratulations on the high position he has taken in the eyes of posterity!' Very trying, very trying. However, in giving him directions, I reflect beforehand, 'Perhaps he may not like this,' or 'He might take it ill if I asked that,' and so we get on very well. Indeed, better than I could have expected."

"Is the tragedy named, sir?" asked Rosa.

"Strictly between ourselves," answered Mr. Grewgious, "it has a dreadfully appropriate name. It is called *The Thorn of Anxiety*. But Mr. Bazzard hopes — and I hope — that it will come out at last."

It was not hard to divine that Mr. Grewgious had related the Bazzard history thus fully, at least quite as much for the recreation of his ward's mind from the subject that had driven her there, as for the gratification of his own tendency to be social and communicative. "And now, my dear," he said at this point, "if you are not too tired to tell me more of what passed to-day, — but only if you feel quite able, — I should be glad to hear it. I may digest it the better, if I sleep on it to-night."

Rosa, composed now, gave him a faithful account of the interview. Mr. Grewgious often smoothed his head while it was in progress, and begged to be told a second time those parts which bore on Helena and Neville. When Rosa had finished, he sat, grave, silent, and meditative, for a while.

"Clearly narrated," was his only remark at last, "and, I hope, clearly put away here," smoothing his head again. "See, my dear," taking her to the open window, "where they live! The dark windows over yonder."

"I may go to Helena to-morrow?" asked Rosa.

"I should like to sleep on that question to-night," he answered, doubtfully. "But let me take you to your own rest, for you must need it."

With that, Mr. Grewgious helped her to get her hat on again, and hung upon his arm the very little bag that

was of no earthly use, and led her by the hand (with a certain stately awkwardness, as if he were going to walk a minuet) across Holborn, and into Furnival's Inn. At the hotel door, he confided her to the Unlimited head-chambermaid, and said that while she went up to see her room, he would remain below, in case she should wish it exchanged for another, or should find that there was anything she wanted.

Rosa's room was airy, clean, comfortable, almost gay. The Unlimited had laid in everything omitted from the very little bag (that is to say, everything she could possibly need), and Rosa tripped down the great many stairs again, to thank her guardian for his thoughtful and affectionate care of her.

"Not at all, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious, infinitely gratified; "it is I who thank you for your charming confidence and for your charming company. Your breakfast will be provided for you in a neat, compact, and graceful little sitting-room (appropriate to your figure), and I will come to you at ten o'clock in the morning. I hope you don't feel very strange indeed, in this strange place."

"O no, I feel so safe!"

"Yes, you may be sure that the stairs are fire-proof," said Mr. Grewgious, "and that any outbreak of the devouring element would be perceived and suppressed by the watchmen."

"I did not mean that," Rosa replied. "I mean, I feel so safe from him."

"There is a stout gate of iron bars to keep him out," said Mr. Grewgious, smiling, "and Furnival's is fire-proof and specially watched and lighted, and I live over the way!" In the stoutness of his knight-errantry, he seemed to think the last-named protection all-sufficient. In the same spirit, he said to the gate-porter as he went out, "If some one staying in the hotel should wish to send across the road to me in the night, a crown will be ready for the messenger." In the same spirit, he walked up and down outside the iron gate for the best part of an hour, with some solicitude; occasionally looking in between the bars, as if he had laid a dove in a high roost in a cage of lions, and had it on his mind that she might tumble out

CHAPTER XXI.

A RECOGNITION.

Nothing occurred in the night to flutter the tired dove, and the dove arose refreshed. With Mr. Grewgious when the clock struck ten in the morning, came Mr. Crisparkle, who had come at one plunge out of the river at Cloisterham.

"Miss Twinkleton was so uneasy, Miss Rosa," he explained to her, "and came round to Ma and me with your note, in such a state of wonder, that, to quiet her, I volunteered on this service by the very first train to be caught in the morning. I wished at the time that you had come to me ; but now I think it best that you did *as* you did, and came to your guardian."

"I did think of you," Rosa told him ; "but Minor Canon Corner was so near him —"

"I understand. It was quite natural."

"I have told Mr. Crisparkle," said Mr. Grewgious, "all that you told me last night, my dear. Of course I should have written it to him immediately ; but his coming was most opportune. And it was particularly kind of him to come, for he had but just gone."

"Have you settled," asked Rosa, appealing to them both, "what is to be done for Helena and her brother ?"

"Why really," said Mr. Crisparkle, "I am in great perplexity. If even Mr. Grewgious, whose head is much longer than mine, and who is a whole night's cogitation in advance of me, is undecided, what must I be !"

The Unlimited here put her head in at the door, — after having rapped, and been authorized to present herself, — announcing that a gentleman wished for a word with another gentleman named Crisparkle, if any such gentleman were there. If no such gentleman were there, he begged pardon for being mistaken.

"Such a gentleman is here," said Mr. Crisparkle, "but is engaged just now."

"Is it a dark gentleman?" interposed Rosa, retreating on her guardian.

"No, Miss, more of a brown gentleman."

"You are sure not with black hair?" asked Rosa, taking courage.

"Quite sure of that, Miss. Brown hair and blue eyes."

"Perhaps," hinted Mr. Grewgious, with habitual caution, "it might be well to see him, reverend sir, if you don't object. When one is in a difficulty or at a loss, one never knows in what direction a way out may chance to open. It is a business principle of mine, in such a case, not to close up any direction, but to keep an eye on every direction that may present itself. I could relate an anecdote in point, but that it would be premature."

"If Miss Rosa will allow me then? Let the gentleman come in," said Mr. Crisparkle.

The gentleman came in; apologized, with a frank but modest grace, for not finding Mr. Crisparkle alone; turned to Mr. Crisparkle, and smilingly asked the unexpected question, "Who am I?"

"You are the gentleman I saw smoking under the trees in Staple Inn a few minutes ago."

"True. There I saw you. Who else am I?"

Mr. Crisparkle concentrated his attention on a handsome face, much sunburnt; and the ghost of some departed boy seemed to rise gradually and dimly in the room.

The gentleman saw a struggling recollection lighten up the Minor Canon's features, and, smiling again, said, "What will you have for breakfast this morning? You are out of jam."

"Wait a moment!" cried Mr. Crisparkle, raising his right hand. "Give me another instant! Tartar!"

The two shook hands with the greatest heartiness, and then went the wonderful length — for Englishmen — of laying their hands, each on the other's shoulders, and looking joyfully each into the other's face.

"My old fag!" said Mr. Crisparkle.

"My old master!" said Mr. Tartar.

"You saved me from drowning!" said Mr. Crisparkle.

"After which you took to swimming, you know!" said Mr. Tartar.

"God bless my soul!" said Mr. Crisparkle.

"Amen!" said Mr. Tartar.

And then they fell to shaking hands most heartily again.

"Imagine," exclaimed Mr. Crisparkle, with glistening eyes, — "Miss Rosa Bud and Mr. Grewgious, imagine Mr. Tartar, when he was the smallest of juniors, diving for me, catching me, a big heavy senior, by the hair of the head, and striking out for the shore with me like a water-giant!"

"Imagine my not letting him sink, as I was his fag!" said Mr. Tartar. "But the truth being that he was my best protector and friend, and did me more good than all the masters put together, an irrational impulse seized me to pick him up or go down with him."

"Hem! Permit me, sir, to have the honor," said Mr. Grewgious, advancing with extended hand, "for an honor I truly esteem it. I am proud to make your acquaintance. I hope you did n't take cold. I hope you were not inconvenienced by swallowing too much water. How have you been since?"

It was by no means apparent that Mr. Grewgious knew what he said, though it was very apparent that he meant to say something highly friendly and appreciative.

If Heaven, Rosa thought, had but sent such courage and skill to her poor mother's aid! And he to have been so slight and young then!

"I don't wish to be complimented upon it, I thank you, but I think I have an idea," Mr. Grewgious announced, after taking a jog-trot or two across the room, so unexpected and unaccountable that they had all stared at him, doubtful whether he was choking or had the cramp. "I *think* I have an idea. I believe I have had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Tartar's name as tenant of the top set in the house next the top set in the corner?"

"Yes, sir," returned Mr. Tartar. "You are right so far."

"I am right so far," said Mr. Grewgious. "Tick that off," which he did, with his right thumb on his left

"Might you happen to know the name of your neighbor in the top set on the other side of the party-wall?" coming very close to Mr. Tartar, to lose nothing of his face, in his shortness of sight.

"Landless."

"Tick that off," said Mr. Grewgious, taking another trot and then coming back. "No personal knowledge, I suppose, sir?"

"Slight, but some."

"Tick that off," said Mr. Grewgious, taking another trot and again coming back. "Nature of knowledge, Mr. Tartar?"

"I thought he seemed to be a young fellow in a poor way, and I asked his leave — only within a day or so — to share my flowers up there with him; that is to say, to extend my flower-garden to his windows."

"Would you have the kindness to take seats?" said Mr. Grewgious. "I *have* an idea."

They complied; Mr. Tartar more the less readily for being all abroad; and Mr. Grewgious, seated in the centre, with his hands upon his knees, thus stated his idea with his usual manner of having got the statement by heart.

"I cannot as yet make up my mind whether it is prudent to hold open communication under present circumstances, and on the part of the fair member of the present company, with Mr. Neville or Miss Helena. I have reason to know that a local friend of ours (on whom I beg to bestow a passing but a hearty malediction, with the kind permission of my reverend friend) sneaks to and fro, and dodges up and down. When not doing so himself, he may have some informant skulking about, in the person of a watchman, porter, or such-like hanger-on of Staple. On the other hand, Miss Rosa very naturally wishes to see her friend Miss Helena, and it would seem important that at least Miss Helena (if not her brother too, through her) should privately know from Miss Rosa's lips what has occurred and what has been threatened. Am I agreed with generally in the views I take?"

"I entirely coincide with them," said Mr. Crisparkle, who had been very attentive.

"As I have no doubt I should," added Mr. Tartar, smiling, "if I understood them."

"Fair and softly, sir," said Mr. Grewgious; "we shall fully confide in you directly, if you will favor us with your permission. Now, if our local friend should have any informant on the spot, it is tolerably clear that such informant can only be set to watch the chambers in the occupation of Mr. Neville. He reporting to our local friend, who comes and goes there, our local friend would supply for himself, from his own previous knowledge, the identity of the parties. Nobody can be set to watch all Staple, or to concern himself with comers and goers to other sets of chambers, unless, indeed, mine."

"I begin to understand to what you tend," said Mr. Crisparkle, "and highly approve of your caution."

"I need n't repeat that I know nothing yet of the why and wherefore," said Mr. Tartar; "but I also understood to what you tend, so let me say at once that my chambers are freely at your disposal."

"There!" cried Mr. Grewgious, smoothing his head triumphantly. "Now we have all got the idea. You have it, my dear?"

"I think I have," said Rosa, blushing a little as Mr. Tartar looked quickly towards her.

"You see, you go over to Staple with Mr. Crisparkle and Mr. Tartar," said Mr. Grewgious; "I going in and out and out and in, alone, in my usual way; you go up with those gentlemen to Mr. Tartar's rooms; you look into Mr. Tartar's flower-garden; you wait for Miss Helena's appearance there, or you signify to Miss Helena that you are close by; and you communicate with her freely and no spy can be the wiser."

"I am very much afraid I shall be —"

"Be what, my dear?" asked Mr. Grewgious, as she hesitated. "Not frightened?"

"No, not that," said Rosa, shyly; "in Mr. Tartar's way. We seem to be appropriating Mr. Tartar's residence so very coolly."

"I protest to you," returned that gentleman, "that I shall think the better of it forevermore if your voice sounds in it only once."

Rosa, not quite knowing what to say about that, cast down her eyes, and, turning to Mr. Grewgious, dutifully asked if she should put her hat on. Mr. Grewgious being

of opinion that she could not do better, she withdrew for the purpose. Mr. Crisparkle took the opportunity of giving Mr. Tartar a summary of the distresses of Neville and his sister. The opportunity was quite long enough, as the hat happened to require a little extra fitting on.

Mr. Tartar gave his arm to Rosa, and Mr. Crisparkle walked, detached, in front.

"Poor, poor Eddy!" thought Rosa, as they went along.

Mr. Tartar waved his right hand as he bent his head down over Rosa, talking in an animated way.

"It was not so powerful or so sun-browned when it saved Mr. Crisparkle," thought Rosa, glancing at it; "but it must have been very steady and determined even then."

Mr. Tartar told her he had been a sailor, roving everywhere for years and years.

"When are you going to sea again?" asked Rosa.

"Never!"

Rosa wondered what the girls would say if they could see her crossing the wide street on the sailor's arm. And she fancied that the passers-by must think her very little and very helpless contrasted with the strong figure that could have caught her up and carried her out of any danger, miles and miles without resting.

She was thinking further that his far-seeing blue eyes looked as if they had been used to watch danger afar off, and to watch it without flinching, drawing nearer and nearer, when, happening to raise her own eyes, she found that he seemed to be thinking something about *them*.

This a little confused Rosebud, and may account for her never afterwards quite knowing how she ascended (with his help) to his garden in the air, and seemed to get into a marvellous country that came into sudden bloom like the country on the summit of the magic bean-stalk. May it flourish forever!"

CHAPTER XXII.

A GRITTY STATE OF THINGS COMES ON.

MR. TARTAR's chambers were the neatest, the cleanest, and the best-ordered chambers ever seen under the sun, moon, and stars. The floors were scrubbed to that extent that you might have supposed the London blacks emancipated forever and gone out of the land for good. Every inch of brass work in Mr. Tartar's possession was polished and burnished till it shone like a brazen mirror. No speck, nor spot, nor spatter soiled the purity of any of Mr. Tartar's household gods, large, small, or middle-sized. His sitting-room was like the admiral's cabin; his bath-room was like a dairy; his sleeping-chamber, fitted all about with lockers and drawers, was like a seedsman's shop; and his nicely balanced cot just stirred in the midst as if it breathed. Everything belonging to Mr. Tartar had quarters of its own assigned to it; his maps and charts had their quarters; his books had theirs; his brushes had theirs; his boots had theirs; his clothes had theirs; his case-bottles had theirs; his telescopes and other instruments had theirs. Everything was readily accessible. Shelf, bracket, locker, hook, and drawer were equally within reach, and were equally contrived with a view to avoiding waste of room, and providing some snug inches of stowage for something that would have exactly fitted nowhere else. His gleaming little service of plate was so arranged upon his sideboard as that a slack salt-spoon would have instantly betrayed itself; his toilet implements were so arranged upon his dressing-table as that a toothpick of slovenly deportment could have been reported at a glance. So with the curiosities he had brought home from various voyages. Stuffed, dried, repolished, or otherwise preserved, according to their kind; birds, fishes, reptiles, arms, articles

of dress, shells, sea-weeds, grasses, or memorials of coral reef; each was displayed in its especial place, and each could have been displayed in no better place. Paint and varnish seemed to be kept somewhere out of sight, in constant readiness to obliterate stray finger-marks wherever any might become perceptible in Mr. Tartar's chambers. No man-of-war was ever kept more spick and span from careless touch. On this bright summer day a neat awning was rigged over Mr. Tartar's flower-garden as only a sailor could rig it; and there was a sea-going air upon the whole effect, so delightfully complete that the flower-garden might have appertained to stern-windows afloat, and the whole concern might have bowled away gallantly with all on board, if Mr. Tartar had only clapped to his lips the speaking-trumpet that was slung in a corner, and given hoarse orders to have the anchor up, look alive there, men, and get all sail upon her!

Mr. Tartar, doing the honors of this gallant craft, was of a piece with the rest. When a man rides an amiable hobby that shies at nothing and kicks nobody, it is only agreeable to find him riding it with a humorous sense of the droll side of the creature. When the man is a cordial and an earnest man by nature, and withal is perfectly fresh and genuine, it may be doubted whether he is ever seen to greater advantage than at such a time. So Rosa would have naturally thought (even if she had n't been conducted over the ship with all the homage due to the First Lady of the Admiralty, or First Fairy of the Sea), that it was charming to see and hear Mr. Tartar half laughing at, and half rejoicing in his various contrivances. So Rosa would have naturally thought, anyhow, that the sunburnt sailor showed to great advantage when, the inspection finished, he delicately withdrew out of his Admiral's Cabin, beseeching her to consider herself its Queen, and waving her free of his flower-garden, with the hand that had had Mr. Crisparkle's life in it.

"Helena! Helena Landless! Are you there?"

"Who speaks to me? Not Rosa?" Then a second handsome face appearing.

"Yes, my darling!"

"Why, how did you come here, dearest?"

"I — I don't quite know," said Rosa with a blush; "unless I am dreaming!"

Why with a blush? For their two faces were alone with the other flowers. Are blushes among the fruits of the country of the magic beanstalk.

"I am not dreaming," said Helena, smiling. "I should take more for granted if I were. How do we come together — or so near together — so very unexpectedly?"

Unexpectedly indeed, among the dingy gables and chimney-pots of P. J. T.'s connection, and the flowers that had sprung from the salt sea. But Rosa, waking, told in a hurry how they came to be together, and all the why and wherefore of that matter.

"And Mr. Crisparkle is here," said Rosa, in rapid conclusion; "and could you believe it? Long ago, he saved his life!"

"I could believe any such thing of Mr. Crisparkle," returned Helena, with a mantling face.

(More blushes in the Beanstalk country!)

"Yes, but it was n't Mr. Crisparkle," said Rosa, quickly putting in the correction.

"I don't understand, love."

"It was very nice of Mr. Crisparkle to be saved," said Rosa, "and he couldn't have shown his high opinion of Mr. Tartar more expressively. But it was Mr. Tartar who saved him."

Helena's dark eyes looked very earnestly at the bright face among the leaves, and she asked, in a slower and more thoughtful tone, —

"Is Mr. Tartar with you now, dear?"

"No; because he has given up his rooms to me, — to us, I mean. It is such a beautiful place!"

"Is it?"

"It is like the inside of the most exquisite ship that ever sailed. It is like — it is like —"

"Like a dream?" suggested Helena.

Rosa answered with a little nod, and smelled the flowers.

Helena resumed, after a short pause of silence, during which she seemed (or it was Rosa's fancy) to compassionate somebody: "My poor Neville is reading in his

own room, the sun being so very bright on this side just now. I think he had better not know that you are so near."

"O, I think so, too!" cried Rosa, very readily.

"I suppose," pursued Helena, doubtfully, "that he must know by and by all you have told me; but I am not sure. Ask Mr. Crisparkle's advice, my darling. Ask him whether I may tell Neville as much or as little of what you have told me as I think best."

Rosa subsided into her state-cabin, and propounded the question. The Minor Canon was for the free exercise of Helena's judgment.

"I thank him very much," said Helena, when Rosa emerged again with her report. "Ask him whether it would be best to wait until any more maligning and pursuing of Neville on the part of this wretch shall disclose itself, or to try to anticipate it: I mean, so far as to find out whether any such goes on darkly about us?"

The Minor Canon found this point so difficult to give a confident opinion on, that, after two or three attempts and failures, he suggested a reference to Mr. Grewgious. Helena acquiescing, he betook himself (with a most unsuccessful assumption of lounging indifference) across the quadrangle to P. J. T.'s, and stated it. Mr. Grewgious held decidedly to the general principle that if you could steal a march upon a brigand or a wild beast, you had better do it; and he also held decidedly to the special case that John Jasper was a brigand and a wild beast in combination.

Thus advised, Mr. Crisparkle came back again and reported to Rosa, who in her turn reported to Helena. She, now steadily pursuing her train of thought at her window, considered thereupon.

"We may count on Mr. Tartar's readiness to help us, Rosa?" she inquired.

O yes! Rosa shyly thought so. O yes, Rosa shyly believed she could almost answer for it. But should she ask Mr. Crisparkle? "I think your authority on the point as good as his, my dear," said Helena, sedately, "and you need n't disappear again for that." Odd of Helena!

"You see, Neville," Helena pursued after more reflec-

tion, "knows no one else here: he has not so much as exchanged a word with any one else here. If Mr. Tartar would call to see him openly and often; if he would spare a minute for the purpose, frequently; if he would even do so, almost daily; something might come of it."

"Something might come of it, dear?" repeated Rosa, surveying her friend's beauty with a highly perplexed face. "Something might?"

"If Neville's movements are really watched, and if the purpose really is to isolate him from all friends and acquaintance and wear his daily life out, grain by grain (which would seem to be the threat to you), does it not appear likely," said Helena, "that his enemy would in some way communicate with Mr. Tartar to warn him off from Neville? In which case we might not only know the fact, but might know from Mr. Tartar what the terms of the communication were."

"I see!" cried Rosa. And immediately darted into her state-cabin again.

Presently her pretty face reappeared, with a greatly heightened color, and she said that she had told Mr. Crisparkle, and that Mr. Crisparkle had fetched in Mr. Tartar, and that Mr. Tartar—"who is waiting now in case you want him," added Rosa, with a half-look back, and in not a little confusion, between the inside of the state-cabin and out—had declared his readiness to act as she had suggested, and to enter on his task that very day.

"I thank him from my heart," said Helena. "Pray tell him so."

Again not a little confused between the Flower-garden and the Cabin, Rosa dipped in with her message, and dipped out again with more assurances from Mr. Tartar, and stood wavering in a divided state between Helena and him, which proved that confusion is not always necessarily awkward, but may sometimes present a very pleasant appearance.

"And now, darling," said Helena, "we will be mindful of the caution that has restricted us to this interview for the present, and will part. I hear Neville moving too. Are you going back?"

"To Miss Twinkleton's?" asked Rosa.

"Yes."

"O, I could never go there any more; I could n't, indeed, after that dreadful interview!" said Rosa.

"Then where *are* you going, pretty one?"

"Now I come to think of it, I don't know," said Rosa. "I have settled nothing at all yet, but my guardian will take care of me. Don't be uneasy, dear. I shall be sure to be somewhere."

(It did seem likely.)

"And I shall hear of my Rosebud from Mr. Tartar?" inquired Helena.

"Yes, I suppose so; from —" Rosa looked back again in a flutter, instead of supplying the name. "But tell me one thing before we part, dearest Helena. Tell me that you are sure, sure, sure, I could n't help it."

"Help it, love?"

"Help making him malicious and revengeful. I could n't hold any terms with him, could I?"

"You know how I love you, darling," answered Helena, with indignation, "but I would sooner see you dead at his wicked feet."

"That's a great comfort to me! And you will tell your poor brother so, won't you? And you will give him my remembrance and my sympathy? And you will ask him not to hate me?"

With a mournful shake of the head, as if that would be quite a superfluous entreaty, Helena lovingly kissed her two hands to her friend, and her friend's two hands were kissed to her, and then she saw a third hand (a brown one) appear among the flowers and leaves, and help her friend out of sight.

The reflection that Mr. Tartar produced in the Admiral's Cabin by merely touching the spring knob in a locker and the handle of a drawer, was a dazzling enchanted repast. Wonderful macaroons, glittering liqueurs, magically preserved tropical spices, and jellies of celestial tropical fruits, displayed themselves profusely at an instant's notice. But Mr. Tartar could not make time stand still; and time, with his hard-hearted fleetness, strode on so fast that Rosa was obliged to come down from the Beanstalk country to earth, and her guardian's chambers.

"And now, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious, "what is to be done next? To put the same thought in another form; what is to be done with you?"

Rosa could only look apologetically sensible of being very much in her own way, and in everybody else's. Some passing idea of living, fire-proof, up a good many stairs in Furnival's Inn for the rest of her life was the only thing in the nature of a plan that occurred to her.

"It has come into my thoughts," said Mr. Grewgious, "that as the respected lady, Miss Twinkleton, occasionally repairs to London in the recess, with the view of extending her connection, and being available for interviews with metropolitan parents, if any, — whether, until we have time in which to turn ourselves round, we might invite Miss Twinkleton to come and stay with you for a month?"

"Stay where, sir?"

"Whether," explained Mr. Gregious, "we might take a furnished lodging in town for a month, and invite Miss Twinkleton to assume the charge of you in it for that period?"

"And afterwards?" hinted Rosa.

"And afterwards," said Mr. Grewgious, "we should be no worse off than we are now."

"I think that might smooth the way," assented Rosa.

"Then let us," said Mr. Grewgious, rising, "go and look for a furnished lodging. Nothing could be more acceptable to me than the sweet presence of last evening for all the remaining evenings of my existence; but these are not fit surroundings for a young lady. Let us set out in quest of adventures, and look for a furnished lodging. In the mean time, Mr. Crisparkle here, about to return home immediately, will no doubt kindly see Miss Twinkleton and invite that lady to co-operate in our plan."

Mr. Crisparkle, willingly accepting the commission, took his departure; Mr. Gregious and his ward set forth on their expedition.

As Mr. Grewgious's idea of looking at a furnished lodging was to get on the opposite side of the street to a house with a suitable bill in the window, and stare at it; and then work his way tortuously to the back of the house, and stare at that; and then not go in, but make

similar trials of another house, with the same result, their progress was but slow. At length he bethought himself of a widowed cousin, divers times removed, of Mr. Bazzard's, who had once solicited his influence in the lodger world, and who lived in Southampton Street, Bloomsbury Square. This lady's name, stated in uncompromising capitals of considerable size on a brass door-plate, and yet not lucidly as to sex or condition, was **BILLICKIN**.

Personal faintness and an overpowering personal candor were the distinguishing features of Mrs. Billickin's organization. She came languishing out of her own exclusive back parlor, with the air of having been expressly brought to for the purpose from an accumulation of several swoons.

"I hope I see you well, sir," said Mrs. Billickin, recognizing her visitor with a bend.

"Thank you, quite well. And you, ma'am?" returned Mr. Grewgious.

"I am as well," said Mrs. Billickin, becoming aspirational with excess of faintness, "as I hever ham."

"My ward and an elderly lady," said Mr. Grewgious, "wish to find a genteel lodging for a month or so. Have you any apartments available, ma'am?"

"Mr. Grewgious," returned Mrs. Billickin, "I will not deceive you, far from it. I *have* apartments available."

This, with the air of adding, "Convey me to the stake, if you will, but while I live, I will be candid."

"And now, what apartments, ma'am?" asked Mr. Grewgious, cosily. To tame a certain severity apparent on the part of Mrs. Billickin.

"There is this sitting-room, — which call it what you will, it is the front parlor, miss," said Mrs. Billickin, impressing Rosa into the conversation; "the back parlor being what I cling to and never part with; and there is two bedrooms at the top of the 'ouse with gas laid on. I do not tell you that your bedroom floors is firm, for firm they are not. The gas-fitter himself allowed that to make a firm job, he must go right under your jistes, and it were not worth the outlay as a yearly tenant so to do. The piping is carried above your jistes, and it is best that it should be made known to you."

Mr. Grewgious and Rosa exchanged looks of some dismay, though they had not the least idea what latent horrors this carriage of the piping might involve. Mrs. Billickin put her hand to her heart, as having eased it of a load.

"Well! The roof is all right, no doubt," said Mr. Grewgious, plucking up a little.

"Mr. Grewgious," returned Mrs. Billickin, "if I was to tell you, sir, that to have nothink above you is to have a floor above you, I should put a deception upon you which I will not do. No, sir. Your slates will rattle loose at that elevation in windy weather, do your utmost, best or worst! I defy you, sir, be you what you may, to keep your slates tight, try how you can." Here Mrs. Billickin, having been warm with Mr. Grewgious, cooled a little, not to abuse the moral power she held over him. "Consequent," proceeded Mrs. Billickin, more mildly, but still firmly in her incorruptible candor, — "consequent it would be worse than of no use for me to trapse and travel up to the top of the 'ouse with you, and for you to say, 'Mrs. Billickin, what stain do I notice in the ceiling, for a stain I do consider it?' and for me to answer, 'I do not understand you, sir.' No, sir; I will not be so underhand. I *do* understand you before you p'int it out. It is the wet, sir. It do come in, and it do not come in. You may lay dry there half your lifetime, but the time will come, and it is best that you should know it, when a dripping sop would be no name for you."

Mr. Grewgious looked much disgraced by being prefigured in this pickle.

"Have you any other apartments, ma'am?" he asked.

Mr. Grewgious," returned Mrs. Billickin, with much solemnity, "I have. You ask me have I, and my open and my honest answer air, I have. The first and second floors is wacant, and sweet rooms."

"Come, come! There's nothing against *them*," said Mr. Grewgious, comforting himself.

"Mr. Grewgious," replied Mrs. Billickin, "pardon me, there is the stairs. Unless your mind is prepared for the stairs, it will lead to inevitable disappointment. You cannot, miss," said Mrs. Billickin, addressing Rosa, reproachfully, "place a first floor, and far less a second, on

the level footing of a parlor. No, you cannot do it, Miss, it is beyond your power, and wherefore try?"

Mrs. Billickin put it very feelingly, as if Rosa had shown a headstrong determination to hold the untenable position.

"Can we see these rooms, ma'am?" inquired her guardian.

"Mr. Grewgious," returned Mrs. Billickin, "you can. I will not disguise it from you, sir, you can."

Mrs. Billickin then sent into her back parlor for her shawl (it being a state fiction dating from immemorial antiquity, that she could never go anywhere without being wrapped up), and having been enrolled by her attendant, led the way. She made various genteel pauses on the stairs for breath, and clutched at her heart in the drawing-room as if it had very nearly got loose, and she had caught it in the act of taking wing.

"And the second floor?" said Mr. Grewgious, on finding the first satisfactory.

"Mr. Grewgious," replied Mrs. Billickin, turning upon him with ceremony, as if the time had now come when a distinct understanding on a difficult point must be arrived at, and a solemn confidence established, "the second floor is over this."

"Can we see that too, ma'am?"

"Yes, sir," returned Mrs. Billickin, "it is open as the day."

That also proving satisfactory, Mr. Grewgious retired into a window with Rosa for a few words of consultation, and then, asking for pen and ink, sketched out a line or two of agreement. In the mean time Mrs. Billickin took a seat, and delivered a kind of Index to, or Abstract of, the general question.

"Five-and-forty shillings per week by the month certain at the time of year," said Mrs. Billickin, "is only reasonable to both parties. It is not Bond Street nor yet St. James's Palace; but it is not pretended that it is. Neither is it attempted to be denied—for why should it?—that the Arching leads to a Mews. Mewses must exist. Respecting attendance; two is kep' at liberal wages. Words *has* arisen as to tradesmen, but dirty shoes on fresh hearth-stoning was attributable, and no

wish for a commission on your orders. Coals is either *by* the fire, or *per* the scuttle." She emphasized the prepositions as marking a subtle but immense difference. "Dogs is not viewed with favor. Besides litter, they gets stole, and sharing suspicions is apt to creep in, and unpleasantness takes place."

By this time Mr. Grewgious had his agreement-lines and his earnest-money ready. "I have signed it for the ladies, ma'am," he said, "and you'll have the goodness to sign it for yourself, Christian and Surname, there, if you please."

"Mr. Grewgious," said Mrs. Billickin, in a new burst of candor, "no, sir. You must excuse the Christian name."

Mr. Grewgious stared at her.

"The door-plate is used as a protection," said Mrs. Billickin, "and acts as such, and go from it I will not."

Mr. Grewgious stared at Rosa.

"No, Mr. Grewgious, you must excuse me. So long as this 'ouse is known indefinite as Billickin's, and so long as it is a doubt with the riff-raff where Billickin may be hidin', near the street door or down the airy, and what his weight and size, so long I feel safe. But commit myself to a solitary female statement, no, Miss! Nor would you for a moment wish," said Mrs. Billickin, with a strong sense of injury, "to take that advantage of your sex, if you was not brought to it by inconsiderate example."

Rosa, reddening as if she had made some most disgraceful attempt to overreach the good lady, besought Mr. Grewgious to rest content with any signature. And accordingly, in a baronical way, the sign-manual **BILICKIN** got appended to the document.

Details were then settled for taking possession on the next day but one, when Miss Twinkleton might be reasonably expected; and Rosa went back to Furnival's Inn on her guardian's arm.

Behold Mr. Tartar walking up and down Furnival's Inn, checking himself when he saw them coming, and advancing towards them!

"It occurred to me," hinted Mr. Tartar, "that we might go up the river, the weather being so delicious and

the tide serving. I have a boat of my own at the Temple Stairs."

"I have not been up the river for this many a day," said Mr. Grewgious, tempted.

"I was never up the river," added Rosa.

Within half an hour they were setting this matter right by going up the river. The tide was running with them, the afternoon was charming. Mr. Tartar's boat was perfect. Mr. Tartar and Lobley (Mr. Tartar's man) pulled a pair of oars. Mr. Tartar had a yacht, it seemed, lying somewhere down by Greenhithe; and Mr. Tartar's man had charge of this yacht, and was detached upon his present service. He was a jolly favored man, with tawny hair and whiskers, and a big red face. He was the dead image of the sun in old woodcuts, his hair and whiskers answering for rays all round him. Resplendent in the bow of the boat, he was a shining sight, with a man-of-war's man's shirt on, — or off, according to opinion, — and his arms and breast tattooed all sorts of patterns. Lobley seemed to take it easily, and so did Mr. Tartar; yet their oars bent as they pulled, and the boat bounded under them. Mr. Tartar talked as if he were doing nothing, to Rosa, who was really doing nothing, and to Mr. Grewgious, who was doing this much that he steered all wrong; but what did that matter when a turn of Mr. Tartar's skilful wrist, or a mere grin of Mr. Lobley's over the bow, put all to rights! The tide bore them on in the gayest and most sparkling manner, until they stopped to dine in some everlastingly green garden, needing no matter-of-fact identification here; and then the tide obligingly turned, — being devoted to that party alone for that day; and as they floated idly among some osier beds, Rosa tried what she could do in the rowing way, and came off splendidly, being much assisted; and Mr. Grewgious tried what he could do, and came off on his back, doubled up with an oar under his chin, being not assisted at all. Then there was an interval of rest under boughs (such rest!) what time Mr. Lobley mopped, and, arranging cushions, stretchers, and the like, danced the tight rope the whole length of the boat like a man to whom shoes were a superstition and stockings slavery; and then came the sweet return among delicious odors

of limes in bloom, and musical rippings; and all too soon the great black city cast its shadow on the waters, and its dark bridges spanned them as death spans life, and the everlastingly green garden seemed to be left for everlasting, unregainable and far away.

"Cannot people get through life without gritty stages, I wonder!" Rosa thought next day, when the town was very gritty again, and everything had a strange and an uncomfortable appearance of seeming to wait for something that would n't come? No. She began to think that now the Cloisterham school days had glided past and gone, the gritty stages would begin to set in at intervals and make themselves wearily known!

Yet what did Rosa expect? Did she expect Miss Twinkleton? Miss Twinkleton duly came. Forth from her back parlor issued the Billickin to receive Miss Twinkleton, and War was in the Billickin's eye from that fell moment.

Miss Twinkleton brought a quantity of luggage with her, having all Rosa's as well as her own. The Billickin took it ill that Miss Twinkleton's mind, being sorely disturbed by this luggage, failed to take in her personal identity with that clearness of perception which was due to its demands. Stateliness mounted her gloomy throne upon the Billickin's brow in consequence. And when Miss Twinkleton, in agitation, taking stock of her trunks and packages, of which she had seventeen, particularly counted in the Billickin herself as number eleven, the B. found it necessary to repudiate.

"Things cannot too soon be put upon the footing," said she, with a candor so demonstrative as to be almost obtrusive, "that the person of the 'ouse is not a box nor yet a bundle, nor a carpet-bag. No, I am 'ily obleeged to you, Miss Twinkleton, nor yet a beggar."

This last disclaimer had reference to Miss Twinkleton's distractedly pressing two and sixpence on her instead of the cabman.

Thus cast off, Miss Twinkleton wildly inquired "which gentleman" was to be paid? There being two gentlemen in that position (Miss Twinkleton having arrived with two cabs), each gentleman, on being paid, held forth his two and sixpence on the flat of his open hand, and with a



speechless stare and a dropped jaw displayed his wrong to heaven and earth. Terrified by this alarming spectacle, Miss Twinkleton placed another shilling in each hand, at the same time appealing to the law in flurried accents and recounting her luggage, this time with the two gentlemen in, who caused the total to come out complicated. Meanwhile the two gentlemen, each looking very hard at the last shilling grumblingly, as if it might become eighteenpence if he kept his eyes on it, descended the doorsteps, ascended their carriages, and drove away, leaving Miss Twinkleton on a bonnet-box in tears.

The Billickin beheld this manifestation of weakness without sympathy, and gave directions for "a young man to be got in" to wrestle with the luggage. When that gladiator had disappeared from the arena, peace ensued, and the new lodgers dined.

But the Billickin had somehow come to the knowledge that Miss Twinkleton kept a school. The leap from that knowledge to the inference that Miss Twinkleton set herself to teach *her* something was easy. "But you don't do it," soliloquized the Billickin; "*I* am not your pupil, whatever she," meaning Rosa, "may be, poor thing!"

Miss Twinkleton, on the other hand, having changed her dress and recovered her spirits, was animated by a bland desire to improve the occasion in all ways, and to be as serene a model as possible. In a happy compromise between her two states of existence she had already become, with her work-basket before her, the equably vivacious companion with a slight judicious flavoring of information, when the Billickin announced herself.

"I will not hide from you, ladies," said the B., enveloped in the shawl of state, "for it is not my character to hide, neither my motives, nor my actions, that I take the liberty to look in upon you to express a 'ope that your dinner was to your liking. Though not Professed but Plain, still her wages should be a sufficient object to her to stimulate to soar above mere roast and biled."

"We dined very well indeed," said Rosa, "thank you."

"Accustomed," said Miss Twinkleton, with a gracious air, which to the jealous ears of the Billickin seemed to

add, "My good woman," — "accustomed to a liberal and nutritious, yet plain and salutary diet, we have found no reason to bemoan our absence from the ancient city and the methodical household in which the quiet routine of our lot has been hitherto cast."

"I did think it well to mention to my cook," observed the Billickin, with a gush of candor, "which I 'ope you will agree with, Miss Twinkleton, was a right precaution, that the young lady being used to what we should consider here but poor diet, had better be brought forward by degrees. For, a rush from scanty feeding to generous feeding, and from what you may call messing to what you may call method, do require a power of constitution, which is not often found in youth, particular when undermined by boarding-school?"

It will be seen that the Billickin now openly pitted herself against Miss Twinkleton, as one whom she had fully ascertained to be her natural enemy.

"Your remarks," returned Miss Twinkleton, from a remote moral eminence, "are well meant, I have no doubt; but you will permit me to observe that they develop a mistaken view of the subject, which can only be imputed to your extreme want of accurate information."

"My information," retorted the Billickin, throwing in an extra syllable for the sake of emphasis at once polite and powerful, — "my information, Miss Twinkleton, were my own experience, which I believe is usually considered to be good guidance. But whether so or not, I was put in youth to a very genteel boarding-school, the mistress being no less a lady than yourself, of about your own age, or it may be some years younger, and a poorness of blood flowed from the table which has run through my life."

"Very likely," said Miss Twinkleton, still from her distant eminence; "and very much to be deplored. Rosa, my dear, how are you getting on with your work?"

"Miss Twinkleton," resumed the Billickin, in a courtly manner, "before retiring on the Int, as a lady should, I wish to ask of yourself as a lady, whether I am to consider that my words is doubted?"

"I am not aware on what ground you cherish such a

supposition," began Miss Twinkleton, when the Billickin neatly stopped her.

"Do not, if you please, put suppositions betwixt my lips, where none such have been imparted by myself. Your flow of words is great, Miss Twinkleton, and no doubt is expected from you by your pupils, and no doubt is considered worth the money. No doubt, I am sure. But not paying for flows of words, and not asking to be favored with them here, I wish to repeat my question."

"If you refer to the poverty of your circulation," began Miss Twinkleton, when again the Billickin neatly stopped her.

"I have used no such expressions."

"If you refer then to the poorness of your blood."

"Brought upon me," stipulated the Billickin, expressly, "at a boarding-school."

"Then," resumed Miss Twinkleton, "all I can say is, that I am bound to believe on your asseveration that it is very poor indeed. I cannot forbear adding, that if that unfortunate circumstance influences your conversation, it is much to be lamented, and it is eminently desirable that your blood were richer. Rosa, my dear, how are you getting on with your work?"

"Hem! Before retiring, Miss," proclaimed the Billickin to Rosa, loftily cancelling Miss Twinkleton, "I should wish it to be understood between yourself and me that my transactions in future is with you alone. I know no elderly lady here, Miss, none older than yourself."

"A highly desirable arrangement, Rosa, my dear," observed Miss Twinkleton.

"It is not, Miss," said the Billickin, with a sarcastic smile, "that I possess the Mill I have heard of, in which old single ladies could be ground up young, (what a gift it would be to some of us!) but that I limit myself to you totally."

"When I have any desire to communicate a request to the person of the house, Rosa, my dear," observed Miss Twinkleton, with majestic cheerfulness, "I will make it known to you, and you will kindly undertake, I am sure, that it is conveyed to the proper quarter."

“Good evening, Miss,” said the Billickin, at once affectionately and distantly. “Being alone in my eyes, I wish you good evening with best wishes, and do not find myself drove, I am truly ’appy to say, into expressing my contempt for any individual, unfortunately for yourself, belonging to you.”

The Billickin gracefully withdrew with this parting speech, and from that time Rosa occupied the restless position of shuttlecock between these two battledores. Nothing could be done without a smart match being played out. Thus, on the daily arising question of dinner, Miss Twinkleton would say, the three being present together, —

“Perhaps, my love, you will consult with the person of the house whether she can procure us a lamb’s fry; or, failing that, a roast fowl.”

On which the Billickin would retort (Rosa not having spoken a word), “If you was better accustomed to butcher’s meat, Miss, you would not entertain the idea of a lamb’s fry. Firstly, because lambs has long been sheep, and secondly, because there is such things as killing-days, and there is not. As to roast fowls, Miss, why you must be quite surfeited with roast fowls, letting alone your buying, when you market for yourself, the agedest of poultry, with the scaliest of legs, quite as if you was accustomed to picking ’em out for cheapness. Try a little invention, Miss. Use yourself to ’ousekeeping a bit. Come now, think of somethink else.”

To this encouragement, offered with the indulgent toleration of a wise and liberal expert, Miss Twinkleton would rejoin, reddening, —

“Or, my dear, you might propose to the person of the house a duck.”

“Well, Miss!” the Billickin would exclaim (still no word being spoken by Rosa), “you do surprise me when you speak of ducks! Not to mention that they’re getting out of season and very dear, it really strikes to my heart to see you have a duck, for the breast, which is the only delicate cuts in a duck, always goes in a direction which I cannot imagine where, and your own plate comes down so miserably skin-and-bony! Try again, Miss. Think more of yourself and less of others. A

dish of sweetbreads now, or a bit of mutton. Some-think at which you can get your equal chance."

Occasionally the game would wax very brisk indeed, and would be kept up with a smartness rendering such an encounter as this quite tame. But the Billickin almost invariably made by far the higher score, and would come in with side hits of the most unexpected and extraordinary description, when she seemed without a chance.

All this did not improve the gritty state of things in London, or the air that London had acquired in Rosa's eyes of waiting for something that never came. Tired of working and conversing with Miss Twinkleton, she suggested working and reading; to which Miss Twinkleton readily assented, as an admirable reader, of tried powers. But Rosa soon made the discovery that Miss Twinkleton did n't read fairly. She cut the love scenes, interpolated passages in praise of female celibacy, and was guilty of other glaring pious frauds. As an instance in point, take the glowing passage: "'Ever dearest and best adored,' said Edward, clasping the dear head to his breast, and drawing the silken hair through his caressing fingers, from which he suffered it to fall like golden rain,— 'ever dearest and best adored, let us fly from the unsympathetic world and the sterile coldness of the stony-hearted, to the rich warm Paradise of Trust and Love.'"

Miss Twinkleton's fraudulent version tamely ran thus: "'Ever engaged to me, with the consent of our parents on both sides, and the approbation of the silver-haired rector of the district,' said Edward, respectfully raising to his lips the taper fingers so skilful in embroidery, tambour, crochet, and other truly feminine arts; 'let me call on thy papa ere to-morrow's dawn has sunk into the west, and propose a suburban establishment, lowly it may be, but within our means, where he will be always welcome as an evening guest, and where every arrangement shall invest economy and constant interchange of scholastic acquirements with the attributes of the ministering angel to domestic bliss.'"

As the days crept on and nothing happened, the neighbors began to say that the pretty girl at Billickin's, who looked so wistfully and so much out of the gritty windows of the drawing-room, seemed to be losing her

spirits. The pretty girl might have lost them but for the accident of lighting on some books of voyages and sea-adventure. As a compensation against their romance, Miss Twinkleton, reading aloud, made the most of all the latitudes and longitudes, bearings, winds, currents, offsets, and other statistics (which she felt to be none the less improving because they expressed nothing whatever to her); while Rosa, listening intently, made the most of what was nearest to her heart. So they both did better than before.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DAWN AGAIN.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Crisparkle and John Jasper met daily under the Cathedral roof, nothing at any time passed between them bearing reference to Edwin Drood after the time, more than half a year gone by, when Jasper mutely showed the Minor Canon the conclusion and the resolution entered in his Diary. It is not likely that they ever met, though so often, without the thoughts of each reverting to the subject. It is not likely that they ever met, though so often, without a sensation on the part of each that the other was a perplexing secret to him. Jasper as the denouncer and pursuer of Neville Landless, and Mr. Crisparkle as his consistent advocate and protector, must at least have stood sufficiently in opposition to have speculated with keen interest on the steadiness and next direction of the other's designs. But neither ever broached the theme.

False pretence not being in the Minor Canon's nature, he doubtless displayed openly that he would at any time have revived the subject, and even desired to discuss it. The determined reticence of Jasper, however, was not to be so approached. Impassive, moody, solitary, resolute, so concentrated on one idea, and on its attendant fixed purpose, that he would share it with no fellow-creature, he lived apart from human life. Constantly exercising an Art which brought him into mechanical harmony with others, and which could not have been pursued unless he and they had been in the nicest mechanical relations and unison, it is curious to consider that the spirit of the man was in moral accordance or interchange with nothing around him. This, indeed, he had confided to his lost nephew before the occasion for his present inflexibility arose.

That he must know of Rosa's abrupt departure, and that he must divine its cause, was not to be doubted. Did he suppose that he had terrified her into silence, or did he suppose that she had imparted to any one—to Mr. Crisparkle himself, for instance—the particulars of his last interview with her? Mr. Crisparkle could not determine this in his mind. He could not but admit, however, as a just man, that it was not, of itself, a crime to fall in love with Rosa, any more than it was a crime to offer to set love above revenge.

The dreadful suspicion of Jasper, which Rosa was so shocked to have received into her imagination, appeared to have no harbor in Mr. Crisparkle's. If it ever haunted Helena's thoughts, or Neville's, neither gave it one spoken word of utterance. Mr. Grewgious took no pains to conceal his implacable dislike of Jasper, yet he never referred it, however distantly, to such a source. But he was a reticent as well as an eccentric man; and he made no mention of a certain evening when he warmed his hands at the Gate House fire, and looked steadily down upon a certain heap of torn and miry clothes upon the floor.

Drowsy Cloisterham, whenever it awoke to a passing reconsideration of a story above six months old, and dismissed by the bench of magistrates, was pretty equally divided in opinion whether John Jasper's beloved nephew had been killed by his treacherously passionate rival, or in an open struggle; or had, for his own purposes, spirited himself away. It then lifted up its head to notice that the bereaved Jasper was still ever devoted to discovery and revenge; and then dozed off again. This was the condition of matters, all round, at the period to which the present history has now attained.

The Cathedral doors have closed for the night, and the Choir Master, on a short leave of absence for two or three services, sets his face towards London. He travels thither by the means by which Rosa travelled, and arrives, as Rosa arrived, on a hot, dusty evening.

His travelling-baggage is easily carried in his hand, and he repairs with it, on foot, to a hybrid hotel in a little square behind Aldersgate Street, near the General Post-Office. It is hotel, boarding-house, or lodging-house,

at its visitor's option. It announces itself in the new Railway Advertisers, as a novel enterprise timidly beginning to spring up. It bashfully, almost apologetically, gives the traveller to understand that it does not expect him, on the good old constitutional hotel plan, to order a pint of sweet blacking for his drinking, and throw it away; but insinuates that he may have his boots blacked instead of his stomach, and maybe also have bed, breakfast, attendance, and a porter up all night, for a certain fixed charge. From these and similar premises many true Britons in the lowest spirits deduce that the times are levelling times, except in the article of high roads, of which there will shortly be not one in England.

He eats without appetite, and soon goes forth again. Eastward, and still eastward through the stale streets, he takes his way, until he reaches his destination; a miserable court, specially miserable among many such.

He ascends a broken staircase, opens a door, looks into a dark, stifling room, and says, "Are you alone here?"

"Alone, deary; worse luck for me and better for you," replies a croaking voice. "Come in, come in, whoever you be; I can't see you till I light a match, yet I seem to know the sound of your speaking. I am acquainted with you, ain't I?"

"Light your match, and try."

"So I will, deary, so I will; but my hand that shakes, as I can't lay it on a match all in a moment. And I cough so, that, put my matches where I may, I never find 'em there. They jump and start, as I cough and cough, like live things. Are you off a voyage, deary?"

"No."

"Not sea-faring?"

"No."

"Well, there's land customers and there's water customers. I'm a mother to both. Different from Jack Chinaman t' other side the court. He ain't a father to neither. It ain't in him. And he ain't got the true secret of mixing, though he charges as much as me that has, and more if he can get it. Here's a match, and now where's the candle? If my cough takes me, I shall cough out twenty matches afore I gets a light."

But she finds the candle, and lights it before the cough

comes on. It seizes her in the moment of success, and she sits down rocking herself to and fro, and gasping at intervals, — “O, my lungs is awful bad, my lungs is wore away to cabbage-nets!” until the fit is over. During its continuance she has had no power of sight, or any other power not absorbed in the struggle; but as it leaves her, she begins to strain her eyes, and as soon as she is able to articulate, she cries, staring,—

“Why, it’s you!”

“Are you so surprised to see me?”

“I thought I never should have seen you again, deary. I thought you was dead and gone to Heaven.”

“Why?”

“I did n’t suppose you could have kept away, alive, so long, from the poor old soul with the real receipt for mixing it. And you are in mourning too! Why did n’t you come and have a pipe or two of comfort? Did they leave you money, perhaps, and so you did n’t want comfort?”

“No!”

“Who was they as died, deary?”

“A relative.”

“Died of what, lovey?”

“Probably, Death.”

“We are short to-night!” cries the woman, with a propitiatory laugh. “Short and snappish we are! But we’re out of sorts for want of a smoke. We’ve got the all-overs, have n’t us, deary? But this is the place to cure ’em in; this is the place where the all-overs is smoked off!”

“You may make ready then,” replies the visitor, “as soon as you like.”

He divests himself of his shoes, loosens his cravat, and lies across the foot of the squalid bed, with his head resting on his left hand.

“Now you begin to look like yourself,” says the woman, approvingly. “Now I begin to know my old customer indeed! Been trying to mix for yourself, this long time, poppet?”

“I have been taking it now and then in my own way.”

“Never take it your own way. It ain’t good for trade, and it ain’t good for you. Where’s my ink-bottle, and

where 's my thimble, and where 's my little spoon? He 's going to take it in a artful form now, my deary dear!"

Entering on her process, and beginning to bubble and blow at the faint spark enclosed in the hollow of her hands, she speaks from time to time in a tone of snuffling satisfaction, without leaving off. When he speaks, he does so without looking at her, and as if his thoughts were already roaming away by anticipation.

"I 've got a pretty many smokes ready for you, first and last, have n't I, chuckey?"

"A good many."

"When you first come, you was quite new to it; war n't ye?"

"Yes, I was easily disposed of, then."

"But you got on in the world, and was able by and by to take your pipe with the best of 'em, war n't ye?"

"Ay. And the worst."

"It 's just ready for you. What a sweet singer you was when you first come! Used to drop your head, and sing yourself off, like a bird! It 's ready for you now, deary."

He takes it from her with great care, and puts the mouthpiece to his lips. She seats herself beside him, ready to refill the pipe. After inhaling a few whiffs in silence, he doubtingly accosts her with,—

"Is it as potent as it used to be?"

"What do you speak of, deary?"

"What should I speak of, but what I have in my mouth?"

"It 's just the same. Always the identical same."

"It does n't taste so. And it 's slower."

"You 've got more used to it, you see."

"That may be the cause, certainly. Look here." He stops, becomes dreamy, and seems to forget that he has invited her attention. She bends over him, and speaks in his ear.

"I 'm attending to you. Says you just now, look here. Says I now, I am attending to ye. We was talking just before of your being used to it."

"I know all that. I was only thinking. Look here. Suppose you had something in your mind; something you were going to do."

"Yes, deary; something I was going to do?"

"But had not quite determined to do."

"Yes, deary."

"Might or might not do, you understand."

"Yes." With the point of a needle she stirs the contents of the bowl.

"Should you do it in your fancy when you were lying here doing this?"

She nods her head. "Over and over again."

"Just like me! I did it over and over again. I have done it hundreds of thousands of times in this room."

"It's to be hoped it was pleasant to do, deary."

"It *was* pleasant to do!"

He says this with a savage air, and a spring or start at her. Quite unmoved, she retouches and replenishes the contents of the bowl with her little spatula. Seeing her intent upon the occupation, he sinks into his former attitude.

"It was a journey, a difficult and dangerous journey. That was the subject in my mind. A hazardous and perilous journey, over abysses where a slip would be destruction. Look down, look down! You see what lies at the bottom there?"

He has darted forward to say it, and to point at the ground, as though at some imaginary object far beneath. The woman looks at him, as his spasmodic face approaches close to hers, and not at his pointing. She seems to know what the influence of her perfect quietude will be; if so, she has not miscalculated it, for he subsides again.

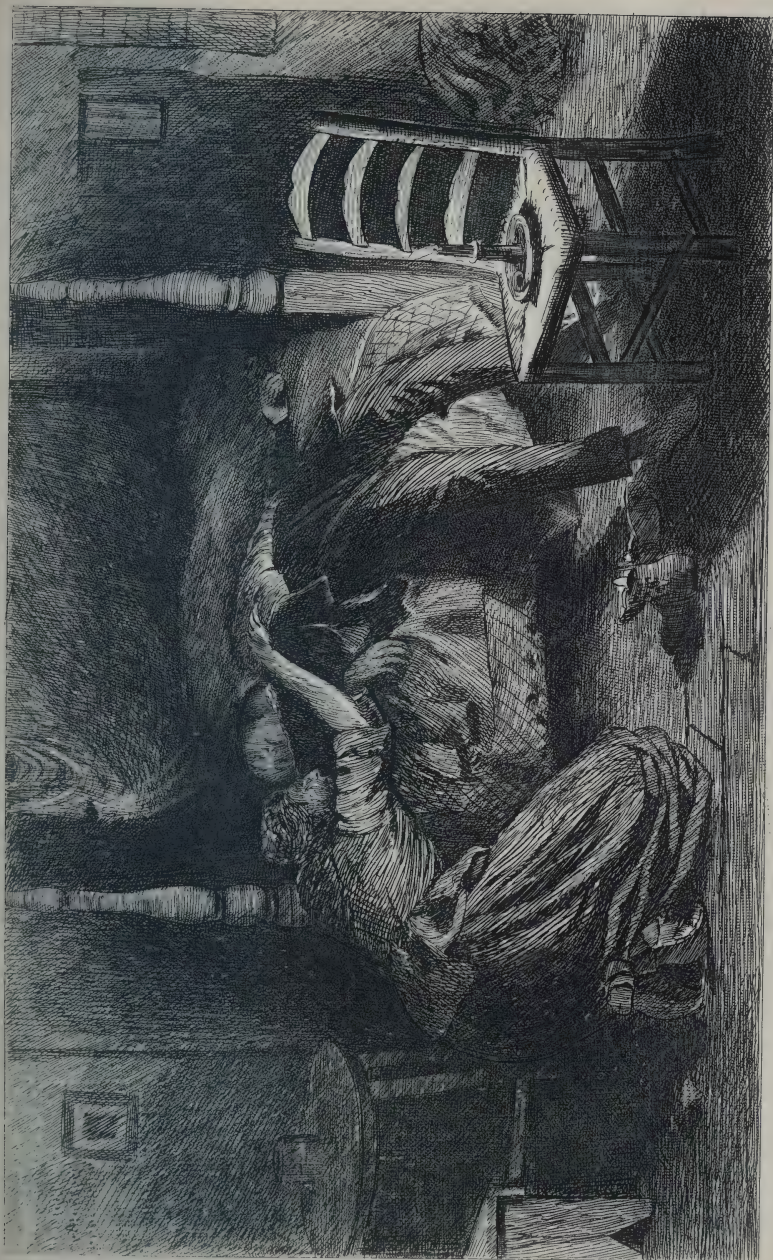
"Well; I have told you, I did it, here, hundreds of thousands of times. What do I say? I did it millions and billions of times. I did it so often, and through such vast expanses of time, that when it was really done, it seemed not worth the doing, it was done so soon."

"That's the journey you have been away upon?" she quietly remarks.

He glares at her as he smokes; and then, his eyes becoming filmy, answers: "That's the journey."

Silence ensues. His eyes are sometimes closed and sometimes open. The woman sits beside him, very attentive to the pipe, which is all the while at his lips.

"I'll warrant," she observes, when he has been look-



ing fixedly at her for some consecutive moments, with a singular appearance in his eyes of seeming to see her a long way off, instead of so near him, — “I’ll warrant you made the journey in a many ways when you made it so often?”

“No, always in one way.”

“Always in the same way?”

“Ay.”

“In the way in which it was really made at last?”

“Ay.”

“And always took the same pleasure in harping on it?”

“Ay.”

For the time he appears unequal to any other reply than this lazy monosyllabic assent. Probably to assure herself that it is not the assent of a mere automaton she reverses the form of her next sentence.

“Did you never get tired of it, deary, and try to call up something else for a change?”

He struggles into a sitting posture, and retorts upon her: “What do you mean? What did I want? What did I come for?”

She gently lays him back again, and, before returning him the instrument he has dropped, revives the fire in it with her own breath; then says to him coaxingly, —

“Sure, sure, sure! Yes, yes, yes! Now I go along with you. You was too quick for me. I see now. You come o’ purpose to take the journey. Why, I might have known it, through its standing by you so.”

He answers first with a laugh, and then with a passionate setting of his teeth: “Yes, I came on purpose. When I could not bear my life I came to get the relief, and I got it. It was one! It was one!” This repetition with extraordinary vehemence, and the snarl of a wolf.

She observes him very cautiously, as though mentally feeling her way to her next remark. It is: “There was a fellow-traveller, deary.”

“Ha ha ha!” He breaks into a ringing laugh, or rather yell.

“To think,” he cries, “how often fellow-traveller, and yet not know it! To think how many times he went the journey, and never saw the road!”

The woman kneels upon the floor, with her arms crossed on the coverlet of the bed, close by him, and her chin upon them. In this crouching attitude she watches him. The pipe is falling from his mouth. She puts it back, and, laying her hand upon his chest, moves him slightly from side to side. Upon that he speaks, as if she had spoken.

"Yes! I always made the journey first, before the changes of colors, and the great landscapes, and glittering processions began. They could n't begin till it was off my mind. I had no room till then for anything else."

Once more he lapses into silence. Once more she lays her hand upon his chest, and moves him slightly to and fro, as a cat might stimulate a half-slain mouse. Once more he speaks, as if she had spoken.

"What? I told you so. When it comes to be real at last, it is so short that it seems unreal for the first time. Hark!"

"Yes, deary. I'm listening."

"Time and place are both at hand."

He is on his feet, speaking in a whisper, and as if in the dark.

"Time, place, and fellow-traveller," she suggests, adopting his tone, and holding him softly by the arm.

"How could the time be at hand unless the fellow-traveller was? Hush! The journey's made. It's over."

"So soon?"

"That's what I said to you. So soon. Wait a little. This is a vision. I shall sleep it off. It has been too short and easy. I must have a better vision than this; this is the poorest of all. No struggle, no consciousness of peril, no entreaty, — and yet I never saw *that* before." With a start.

"Saw what, deary?"

"Look at it! Look what a poor, mean, miserable thing it is! *That* must be real. It's over!"

He has accompanied this incoherence with some wild, unmeaning gestures; but they trail off into the progressive inaction of stupor, and he lies a log upon the bed.

The woman, however, is still inquisitive. With a repetition of her cat-like action, she slightly stirs his body again, and listens; stirs again, and listens; whispers to

it, and listens. Finding it past all rousing for the time, she slowly gets upon her feet, with an air of disappointment, and flicks the face with the back of her hand in turning from it.

But she goes no farther away from it than the chair upon the hearth. She sits in it, with an elbow on one of its arms, and her chin upon her hand, intent upon him. "I heard ye say once," she croaks under her breath, — "I heard ye say once, when I was lying where you're lying, and you were making your speculations upon me, 'Unintelligible!' I heard you say so, of two more than me. But don't ye be too sure always; don't ye be too sure, beauty!"

Unwinking, cat-like, and intent, she presently adds: "Not so potent as it once was? Ah! Perhaps not at first. You may be more right there. Practice makes perfect. I may have learned the secret how to make ye talk, deary."

He talks no more, whether or no. Twitching in an ugly way from time to time, both as to his face and limbs, he lies heavy and silent. The wretched candle burns down; the woman takes its expiring end between her fingers, lights another at it, crams the guttering, frying morsel deep into the candlestick, and rams it home with the new candle, as if she were loading some ill-savored and unseemly weapon of witchcraft; the new candle, in its turn, burns down; and still he lies insensible. At length, what remains of the last candle is blown out, and daylight looks into the room.

It has not looked very long, when he sits up, chilled and shaking, slowly recovers consciousness of where he is, and makes himself ready to depart. The woman receives what he pays her with a grateful "Bless ye, bless ye, deary!" and seems, tired out, to begin making herself ready for sleep as he leaves the room.

But seeming may be false or true. It is false in this case, for, the moment the stairs have ceased to creak under his tread, she glides after him, muttering emphatically, "I'll not miss ye twice!"

There is no egress from the court but by its entrance. With a weird peep from the doorway she watches for his looking back. He does not look back before disappear-

ing, with a wavering step. She follows him, peeps from the court, sees him still faltering on without looking back, and holds him in view.

He repairs to the back of Aldersgate Street, where a door immediately opens to his knocking. She crouches in another doorway, watching that one, and easily comprehending that he puts up temporarily at that house. Her patience is unexhausted by hours. For sustenance she can, and does, buy bread within a hundred yards, and milk as it is carried past her.

He comes forth again at noon, having changed his dress, but carrying nothing in his hand, and having nothing carried for him. He is not going back into the country, therefore, just yet. She follows him a little way, hesitates, instantaneously turns confidently, and goes straight into the house he has quitted.

"Is the gentleman from Cloisterham in-doors?"

"Just gone out."

"Unlucky. When does the gentleman return to Cloisterham?"

"At six this evening."

"Bless ye and thank ye. May the Lord prosper a business where a civil question, even from a poor soul, is so civilly answered!"

"I'll not miss ye twice!" repeats the poor soul in the street, and not so civilly. "I lost ye last where that omnibus you got into nigh your journey's end plied betwixt the station and the place. I was n't so much as certain that you even went right on to the place. Now I know ye did. My gentleman from Cloisterham, I'll be there before ye and bide your coming. I've sworn my oath that I'll not miss ye twice!"

Accordingly, that same evening the poor soul stands in Cloisterham, High Street, looking at the many quaint gables of the Nuns' House, and getting through the time as she best can until nine o'clock; at which hour she has reason to suppose that the arriving omnibus passengers may have some interest for her. The friendly darkness, at that hour, renders it easy for her to ascertain whether this be so or not; and it is so, for the passenger not to be missed twice arrives among the rest.

"Now, let me see what becomes of you. Go on!"

An observation addressed to the air. And yet it might be addressed to the passenger, so compliantly does he go on along the High Street until he comes to an arched gateway, at which he unexpectedly vanishes. The poor soul quickens her pace; is swift, and close upon him entering under the gateway; but only sees a postern staircase on one side of it, and on the other side an ancient vaulted room, in which a large-headed, gray-haired gentleman is writing, under the odd circumstances of sitting open to the thoroughfare and eying all who pass, as if he were toll-taker of the gateway; though the way is free.

"Halloa!" he cries in a low voice, seeing her brought to a stand-still: "who are you looking for?"

"There was a gentleman passed in here this minute, sir."

"Of course there was. What do you want with him?"

"Where do he live, deary?"

"Live? Up the staircase."

"Bless ye! Whisper. What's his name, deary?"

"Surname Jasper, Christian name John. Mr. John Jasper."

"Has he a calling, good gentleman?"

"Calling? Yes. Sings in the choir."

"In the spire?"

"Choir."

"What's that?"

Mr. Datchery rises from his papers, and comes to his doorstep. "Do you know what a cathedral is?" he asks jocosely.

The woman nods.

"What is it?"

She looks puzzled, casting about in her mind to find a definition, when it occurs to her that it is easier to point out the substantial object itself, massive against the dark blue sky and the early stars.

"That's the answer. Go in there at seven to-morrow morning, and you may see Mr. John Jasper, and hear him too."

"Thank ye! Thank ye!"

The burst of triumph in which she thanks him does not escape the notice of the single buffer of an easy temper

living idly on his means. He glances at her; clasps his hands behind him, as the wont of such buffers is; and lounges along the echoing precincts at her side.

"Or," he suggests, with a backward hitch of his head, "you can go up at once to Mr. Jasper's rooms there."

The woman eyes him with a cunning smile, and shakes her head.

"Oh! You don't want to speak to him?"

She repeats her dumb reply, and forms with her lips a soundless "No."

"You can admire him at a distance three times a day, whenever you like. It's a long way to come for that, though."

The woman looks up quickly. If Mr. Datchery thinks she is to be so induced to declare where she comes from, he is of a much easier temper than she is. But she acquits him of such an artful thought, as he lounges along, like the chartered bore of the city, with his uncovered gray hair blowing about, and his purposeless hands rattling the loose money in the pockets of his trousers.

The chink of the money has an attraction for her greedy ears. "Would n't you help me to pay for my travellers' lodging, dear gentleman, and to pay my way along? I am a poor soul, I am indeed, and troubled with a grievous cough."

"You know the Travellers' lodging, I perceive, and are making directly for it," is Mr. Datchery's bland comment, still rattling his loose money. "Been here often, my good woman?"

"Once in all my life."

"Ay, ay?"

They have arrived at the entrance to the Monks' Vineyard. An appropriate remembrance, presenting an exemplary model for imitation, is revived in the woman's mind by the sight of the place. She stops at the gate, and says energetically, —

"By this token, though you may n't believe it, That a young gentleman gave me three and sixpence as I was coughing my breath away on this very grass. I asked him for three and sixpence, and he gave it me."

"Was n't it a little cool to name your sum?" hints Mr. Datchery, still rattling. "Is n't it customary to

leave the amount open? Might n't it have had the appearance, to the young gentleman, only the appearance, that he was rather dictated to?"

"Look 'ee here, deary," she replies, in a confidential and persuasive tone, "I wanted the money to lay it out on a medicine as does me good, and as I deal in. I told the young gentleman so, and he gave it me, and I laid it out honest to the last brass farden. I want to lay out the same sum in the same way now; and if you 'll give it me, I 'll lay it out honest to the last brass farden again, upon my soul!"

"What's the medicine?"

"I 'll be honest with you beforehand, as well as after. It's opium."

Mr. Datchery, with a sudden change of countenance, gives her a sudden look.

"It's opium, deary. Neither more nor less. And it's like a human creetur so far, that you always hear what can be said against it, but seldom what can be said in its praise."

Mr. Datchery begins very slowly to count out the sum demanded of him. Greedily watching his hands, she continues to hold forth on the great example set him.

"It was last Christmas Eve, just arter dark, the once that I was here afore, when the young gentleman gave me the three and six."

Mr. Datchery stops in his counting, finds he has counted wrong, shakes his money together, and begins again.

"And the young gentleman's name," she adds, "was Edwin."

Mr. Datchery drops some money, stoops to pick it up, and reddens with the exertion, as he asks, —

"How do you know the young gentleman's name?"

"I asked him for it, and he told it me. I only asked him the two questions, what was his Chris'en name, and whether he 'd a sweetheart? And he answered, Edwin, and he had n't."

Mr. Datchery pauses with the selected coins in his hand, rather as if he were falling into a brown study of their value, and could n't bear to part with them. The woman looks at him distrustfully, and with her anger brewing for the event of his thinking better of the gift;

but he bestows it on her as if he were abstracting his mind from the sacrifice, and with many servile thanks she goes her way.

John Jasper's lamp is kindled, and his Lighthouse is shining, when Mr. Datchery returns alone towards it. As mariners on a dangerous voyage, approaching an iron-bound coast, may look along the beams of the warning light to the haven lying beyond it that may never be reached, so Mr. Datchery's wistful gaze is directed to this beacon, and beyond.

His object in now revisiting his lodging is merely to put on the hat which seems so superfluous an article in his wardrobe. It is half past ten by the Cathedral clock, when he walks out into the Precincts again; he lingers and looks about him, as though, the enchanted hour when Mr. Durdles may be stoned home having struck, he had some expectation of seeing the Imp who is appointed to the mission of stoning him.

In effect, that Power of Evil is abroad. Having nothing living to stone at the moment, he is discovered by Mr. Datchery in the unholy office of stoning the dead, through the railings of the churchyard. The Imp finds this a relishing and piquing pursuit: firstly, because their resting-place is announced to be sacred; and secondly, because the tall headstones are sufficiently like themselves, on their beat in the dark, to justify the delicious fancy that they are hurt when hit.

Mr. Datchery hails him with: "Halloa, Winks!"

He acknowledges the hail with: "Halloa, Dick!" Their acquaintance seemingly having been established on a familiar footing.

"But I say," he remonstrates, "don't yer go a making my name public. I never means to plead to no name, mind yer. When they says to me in the Lock-up, a going to put me down in the book, 'What's your name?' I says to them, 'Find out.' Likeways when they says, 'What's your religion?' I says, 'Find out.'"

Which, it may be observed in passing, it would be immensely difficult for the State, however statistical, to do.

"Asides which," adds the boy, "there ain't no family of Winkses."

"I think there must be"

"Yer lie, there ain't. The Travellers give me the name on account of my getting no settled sleep and being knocked up all night; whereby I gets one eye roused open afore I've shut the other. That's what Winks means. Deputy's the nighest name to indict me by; but yer would n't catch me pleading to that, neither."

"Deputy be it always, then. We two are good friends; eh, Deputy?"

"Jolly good."

"I forgave you the debt you owed me when we first became acquainted, and many of my sixpences have come your way since; eh, Deputy?"

"Ah! And what's more, yer ain't no friend o' Jarsper's. What did he go a histing me off my legs for?"

"What indeed! But never mind him now. A shilling of mine is going your way to-night, Deputy. You have just taken in a lodger I have been speaking to; an infirm woman with a cough."

"Puffer," assents Deputy, with a shrewd leer of recognition, and smoking an imaginary pipe, with his head very much on one side, and his eyes very much out of their places: "Hopeum Puffer."

"What is her name?"

"'Er Royal Highness the Princess Puffer."

"She has some other name than that; where does she live?"

"Up in London. Among the Jacks."

"The sailors?"

"I said so; Jacks. And Chayner men. And hother Knifers."

"I should like to know, through you, exactly where she lives."

"All right. Give us 'old."

A shilling passes; and, in that spirit of confidence which should pervade all business transactions between principals of honor, this piece of business is considered done.

"But here's a lark!" cries Deputy.

"Where did yer think 'Er Royal Highness is a goin' to, to-morrow morning? Blest if she ain't a goin' to the KIN-FREE-DER-EL!" He greatly prolongs the word in his ecstacy, and smites his leg, and doubles himself up in a fit of shrill laughter.

“How do you know that, Deputy?”

“Cos she told me so just now. She said she must be hup and hout o’ purpose. She ses, ‘Deputy, I must ’ave a early wash, and make myself as swell as I can, for I ’m a goin’ to take a turn at the KIN-FREE-DER-EL!’ He separates the syllables with his former zest, and, not finding his sense of the ludicrous sufficiently relieved by stamping about on the pavement, breaks into a slow and stately dance, perhaps supposed to be performed by the Dean.

Mr. Datchery receives the communication with a well-satisfied though a pondering face, and breaks up the conference. Returning to his quaint lodging, and sitting long over the supper of bread and cheese and salad and ale which Mrs Tope has left prepared for him, he still sits when his supper is finished. At length he rises, throws open the door of a corner cupboard, and refers to a few uncouth chalked strokes on its inner side.

“I like,” says Mr. Datchery, “the old tavern way of keeping scores. Illegible, except to the scorer. The scorer not committed, the scored debited with what is against him. Hum; ha! a very small score this; a very poor score!”

He sighs over the contemplation of its poverty, takes a bit of chalk from one of the cupboard shelves, and pauses with it in his hand, uncertain what addition to make to the account.

“I think a moderate stroke,” he concludes, “is all I am justified in scoring up”; so, suits the action to the word, closes the cupboard, and goes to bed.

A brilliant morning shines on the old city. Its antiquities and ruins are surpassingly beautiful, with the lusty ivy gleaming in the sun, and the rich trees waving in the balmy air. Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods, and fields, — or, rather, from one great garden of the whole cultivated island in its yielding time, — penetrate into the Cathedral, subdue its earthy odor, and preach the Resurrection and the Life. The cold stone tombs of centuries ago grow warm; and flecks of brightness dart into the sternest marble corners of the building, fluttering there like wings.

Comes Mr. Tope with his large keys and yawningly un-

locks and sets open. Come Mrs. Tope and attendant sweeping sprites. Come, in due time, organist and bellows-boy peeping down from the red curtains in the loft, fearlessly flapping dust from books up at that remote elevation, and whisking it from stops and pedals. Come sundry rooks, from various quarters of the sky, back to the great tower; who may be presumed to enjoy vibration, and to know that bell and organ are going to give it them. Come a very small and straggling congregation indeed: chiefly from Minor Canon Corner and the Precincts. Come Mr. Crisparkle, fresh and bright; and his ministering brethren, not quite so fresh and bright. Come the Choir in a hurry (always in a hurry, and struggling into their nightgowns at the last moment, like children shirking bed), and comes John Jasper leading their line. Last of all comes Mr. Datchery into a stall, one of a choice empty collection very much at his service, and glancing about him for Her Royal Highness the Princess Puffer.

The service is pretty well advanced before Mr. Datchery can discern Her Royal Highness. But by that time he has made her out, in the shade. She is behind a pillar, carefully withdrawn from the Choir Master's view, but regards him with the closest attention. All unconscious of her presence, he chants and sings. She grins when he is most musically fervid, and — yes, Mr. Datchery sees her do it! — shakes her fist at him behind the pillar's friendly shelter.

Mr. Datchery looks again to convince himself. Yes, again! As ugly and withered as one of the fantastic carvings on the under brackets of the stall seats, as malignant as the Evil One, as hard as the big brass eagle holding the sacred books upon his wings (and, according to the sculptor's representation of his ferocious attributes, not at all converted by them), she hugs herself in her lean arms, and then shakes both fists at the leader of the Choir.

And at that moment, outside the grated door of the Choir, having eluded the vigilance of Mr. Tope by shifty resources in which he is an adept, Deputy peeps, sharp-eyed, through the bars, and stares astounded from the threatener to the threatened.

The service comes to an end, and the servitors disperse

to breakfast. Mr. Datchery accosts his last new acquaintance outside, when the Choir (as much in a hurry to get their bedgowns off, as they were but now to get them on) have scuffled away.

"Well, mistress. Good morning. You have seen him?"

"*I've seen him, deary; I've seen him!*"

"And you know him?"

"Know him! Better far than all the Reverend Parsons put together know him."

Mrs. Tope's care has spread a very neat, clean breakfast ready for her lodger. Before sitting down to it, he opens his corner-cupboard door; takes his bit of chalk from its shelf; adds one thick line to the score, extending from the top of the cupboard door to the bottom; and then falls to with an appetite.

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MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK
AND OTHER PIECES.

PREFACE TO MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK.

WHEN the author commenced this Work, he proposed to himself three objects.

First. To establish a periodical, which should enable him to present, under one general head, and not as separate and distinct publications, certain fictions which he had it in contemplation to write.

Secondly. To produce these Tales in weekly numbers; hoping that to shorten the intervals of communication between himself and his readers, would be to knit more closely the pleasant relations they had held for Forty Months.

Thirdly. In the execution of this weekly task, to have as much regard as its exigencies would permit, to each story as a whole, and to the possibility of its publication at some distant day, apart from the machinery in which it had its origin.

The characters of Master Humphrey and his three friends, and the little fancy of the clock, were the result of these considerations. When he sought to interest his readers in those who talked, and read, and listened, he revived Mr. Pickwick and his humble friends, not with any intention of reopening an exhausted and abandoned mine, but to connect them, in the thoughts of those whose favorites they had been, with the tranquil enjoyments of Master Humphrey.

It was never the author's intention to make the Members of Master Humphrey's Clock active agents in the stories they are supposed to relate. Having brought himself, in the commencement of his undertaking, to feel an interest in these quiet creatures, and to imagine them in their old chamber of meeting, eager listeners to all he had to tell, the author hoped — as authors will — to suc-

ceed in awakening some of his own emotions in the bosoms of his readers. Imagining Master Humphrey in his chimney-corner, resuming night after night the narrative, — say, of the Old Curiosity Shop, — picturing to himself the various sensations of his hearers, — thinking how Jack Redburn might incline to poor Kit, and perhaps lean too favorably even towards the lighter vices of Mr. Richard Swiveller, — how the deaf gentleman would have his favorite, and Mr. Miles his, — and how all these gentle spirits would trace some faint reflection of their past lives in the varying current of the tale, — he has insensibly fallen into the belief that they are present to his readers as they are to him, and has forgotten that, like one whose vision is disordered, he may be conjuring up bright figures where there is nothing but empty space.

The short papers which are to be found at the beginning of this volume were indispensable to the form of publication and the limited extent of each number, as no story of lengthened interest could be begun until "The Clock" was wound up and fairly going.

The author would fain hope that there are not many who would disturb Master Humphrey and his friends in their seclusion; who would have them forego their present enjoyments to exchange those confidences with each other, the absence of which is the foundation of their mutual trust. For when their occupation is gone, when their tales are ended, and but their personal histories remain, the chimney-corner will be growing cold, and the clock will be about to stop forever.

One other word in his own person, and he returns to the more grateful task of speaking for those imaginary people whose little world lies within these pages.

It may be some consolation to the well-disposed ladies or gentlemen who, in the interval between the conclusion of his last work and the commencement of this, originated a report that he had gone raving mad, to know that it spread as rapidly as could be desired, and was made the subject of considerable dispute; not as regarded the fact, for that was as thoroughly established as the duel between Sir Peter Teazle and Charles Surface in the "School for Scandal"; but with reference to the unfortunate lunatic's place of confinement, — one party

insisting positively on Bedlam, another inclining favorably towards St. Luke's, and a third swearing strongly by the asylum at Hanwell; while each backed its case by circumstantial evidence of the same excellent nature as that brought to bear by Sir Benjamin Backbite on the pistol-shot which struck against the little bronze bust of Shakespeare over the fireplace, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

It will be a great affliction to these ladies and gentlemen to learn — and he is so unwilling to give pain, that he would not whisper the circumstance on any account, did he not feel in a manner bound to do so, in gratitude to those among his friends who were at the trouble of being angry with the absurdity — that their invention made the author's home unusually merry, and gave rise to an extraordinary number of jests, of which he will only add, in the words of the good Vicar of Wakefield, "I cannot say whether we had more wit among us than usual; but I am sure we had more laughing."

MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK.

I.

MASTER HUMPHREY, FROM HIS CLOCK-SIDE IN THE CHIMNEY-CORNER.

THE reader must not expect to know where I live. At present, it is true, my abode may be a question of little or no import to anybody ; but if I should carry my readers with me, as I hope to do, and there should spring up, between them and me, feelings of homely affection and regard attaching something of interest to matters ever so slightly connected with my fortunes or my speculations, even my place of residence might one day have a kind of charm for them. Bearing this possible contingency in mind, I wish them to understand in the outset, that they must never expect to know it.

I am not a churlish old man. Friendless I can never be, for all mankind are my kindred, and I am on ill terms with no one member of my great family. But for many years I have led a lonely, solitary life ; — what wound I sought to heal, what sorrow to forget, originally, matters not now ; it is sufficient that retirement has become a habit with me, and that I am unwilling to break the spell which for so long a time has shed its quiet influence upon my home and heart.

I live in a venerable suburb of London, in an old house, which in bygone days was a famous resort for merry roysterers and peerless ladies, long since departed. It is a silent, shady place, with a paved court-yard so full of echoes that sometimes I am tempted to believe that faint responses to the noises of old times linger there yet, and that these ghosts of sound haunt my footsteps as I pace it up and down. I am the more confirmed in this belief, because, of late years, the echoes that attend my

walks have been less loud and marked than they were wont to be ; and it is pleasanter to imagine in them the rustling of silk brocade, and the light step of some lovely girl, than to recognize in their altered note the failing tread of an old man.

Those who like to read of brilliant rooms and gorgeous furniture would derive but little pleasure from a minute description of my simple dwelling. It is dear to me for the same reason that they would hold it in slight regard. Its worm-eaten doors, and low ceilings crossed by clumsy beams ; its walls of wainscot, dark stairs, and gaping closets ; its small chambers, communicating with each other by winding passages or narrow steps ; its many nooks, scarce larger than its corner-cupboards ; its very dust and dulness, are all dear to me. The moth and spider are my constant tenants, for in my house the one basks in his long sleep, and the other plies his busy loom, secure and undisturbed. I have a pleasure in thinking on a summer's day, how many butterflies have sprung for the first time into light and sunshine from some dark corner of these old walls.

When I first came to live here, which was many years ago, the neighbors were curious to know who I was, and whence I came, and why I lived so much alone. As time went on, and they still remained unsatisfied on these points, I became the centre of a popular ferment, extending for half a mile round, and in one direction for a full mile. Various rumors were circulated to my prejudice. I was a spy, an infidel, a conjurer, a kidnapper of children, a refugee, a priest, a monster. Mothers caught up their infants and ran into their houses as I passed ; men eyed me spitefully, and muttered threats and curses. I was the object of suspicion and distrust ; ay, of downright hatred, too.

But when in course of time they found I did no harm, but, on the contrary, inclined towards them despite their unjust usage, they began to relent. I found my footsteps no longer dogged, as they had often been before, and observed that the women and children no longer retreated, but would stand and gaze at me as I passed their doors. I took this for a good omen, and waited patiently for better times. By degrees I began to make friends among

these humble folks, and though they were yet shy of speaking, would give them "good day," and so pass on. In a little time, those whom I had thus accosted, would make a point of coming to their doors and windows at the usual hour, and nod or courtesy to me; children, too, came timidly within my reach, and ran away quite scared when I patted their heads and bade them be good at school. These little people soon grew more familiar. From exchanging mere words of course with my older neighbors, I gradually became their friend and adviser, the depositary of their cares and sorrows, and sometimes, it may be, the reliever, in my small way, of their distresses. And now I never walk abroad, but pleasant recognitions and smiling faces wait on Master Humphrey.

It was a whim of mine, perhaps as a whet to the curiosity of my neighbors, and a kind of retaliation upon them for their suspicions, — it was, I say, a whim of mine, when I first took up my abode in this place, to acknowledge no other name than Humphrey. With my detractors, I was Ugly Humphrey. When I began to convert them into friends, I was Mr. Humphrey, and Old Mr. Humphrey. At length I settled down into plain Master Humphrey, which was understood to be the title most pleasant to my ear; and so completely a matter of course has it become, that sometimes when I am taking my morning walk in my little court-yard, I overhear my barber — who has a profound respect for me, and would not, I am sure, abridge my honors for the world — holding forth on the other side of the wall, touching the state of "Master Humphrey's" health, and communicating to some friend the substance of the conversation that he and Master Humphrey have had together in the course of the shaving which he has just concluded.

That I may not make acquaintance with my readers under false pretences, or give them cause to complain hereafter, that I have withheld any matter which it was essential for them to have learnt at first, I wish them to know — and I smile sorrowfully to think that the time has been when the confession would have given me pain — that I am a misshapen, deformed old man.

I have never been made a misanthrope by this cause. I have never been stung by any insult, nor wounded by

any jest upon my crooked figure. As a child I was melancholy and timid, but that was because the gentle consideration paid to my misfortune sunk deep into my spirit and made me sad, even in those early days. I was but a very young creature when my poor mother died, and yet I remember that often when I hung around her neck, and oftener still when I played about the room before her, she would catch me to her bosom, and bursting into tears, would soothe me with every term of fondness and affection. God knows I was a happy child at those times, — happy to nestle in her breast, — happy to weep when she did, — happy in not knowing why.

These occasions are so strongly impressed upon my memory, that they seem to have occupied whole years. I had numbered very, very few when they ceased forever, but before then their meaning had been revealed to me.

I do not know whether all children are imbued with a quick perception of childish grace and beauty, and a strong love for it, but I was. I had no thought that I remember, either that I possessed it myself or that I lacked it, but I admired it with an intensity that I cannot describe. A little knot of playmates — they must have been beautiful, for I see them now — were clustered one day round my mother's knee in eager admiration of some picture representing a group of infant angels, which she held in her hand. Whose the picture was, whether it was familiar to me or otherwise, or how all the children came to be there, I forget ; I have some dim thought it was my birthday, but the beginning of my recollection is that we were all together in a garden, and it was summer weather, — I am sure of that, for one of the little girls had roses in her sash. There were many lovely angels in this picture, and I remember the fancy coming upon me to point out which of them represented each child there, and that when I had gone through my companions, I stopped and hesitated, wondering which was most like me. I remember the children looking at each other, and my turning red and hot, and their crowding round to kiss me, saying that they loved me all the same ; and then, and when the old sorrow came into my dear mother's mild and tender look, the truth broke upon me for the first time, and I knew, while watching my awkward and

ungainly sports, how keenly she had felt for her poor crippled boy.

I used frequently to dream of it afterwards, and now my heart aches for that child as if I had never been he, when I think how often he awoke from some fairy change to his own old form, and sobbed himself to sleep again.

Well, well, — all these sorrows are past. My glancing at them may not be without its use, for it may help in some measure to explain why I have all my life been attached to the inanimate objects that people my chamber, and how I have come to look upon them rather in the light of old and constant friends, than as mere chairs and tables which a little money could replace at will.

Chief and first among all these is my Clock, — my old, cheerful, companionable Clock. How can I ever convey to others an idea of the comfort and consolation that this old clock has been for years to me!

It is associated with my earliest recollections. It stood upon the staircase at home (I call it home still mechanically), nigh sixty years ago. I like it for that, but it is not on that account, nor because it is a quaint old thing in a huge oaken case curiously and richly carved, that I prize it as I do. I incline to it as if it were alive, and could understand and give me back the love I bear it.

And what other thing that has not life could cheer me as it does; what other thing that has not life (I will not say how few things that have) could have proved the same patient, true, untiring friend! How often have I sat in the long winter evenings feeling such society in its cricket-voice, that raising my eyes from my book and looking gratefully towards it, the face reddened by the glow of the shining fire has seemed to relax from its staid expression and to regard me kindly; how often in the summer twilight, when my thoughts have wandered back to a melancholy past, have its regular whisperings recalled them to the calm and peaceful present; how often in the dead tranquillity of night has its bell broken the oppressive silence, and seemed to give me assurance that the old clock was still a faithful watcher at my chamber door! My easy-chair, my desk, my ancient furniture, my very books, I can scarcely bring myself to love even these last, like my old clock!

It stands in a snug corner, midway between the fire-side and a low arched door leading to my bedroom. Its fame is diffused so extensively throughout the neighborhood, that I have often the satisfaction of hearing the publican, or the baker, and sometimes even the parish-clerk, petitioning my housekeeper (of whom I shall have much to say by and by) to inform him the exact time by Master Humphrey's Clock. My barber, to whom I have referred, would sooner believe it than the sun. Nor are these its only distinctions. It has acquired, I am happy to say, another, inseparably connecting it not only with my enjoyments and reflections, but with those of other men; as I shall now relate.

I lived alone here for a long time without any friend or acquaintance. In the course of my wanderings by night and day, at all hours and seasons, in city streets and quiet country parts, I came to be familiar with certain faces, and to take it to heart as quite a heavy disappointment if they failed to present themselves each at its accustomed spot. But these were the only friends I knew, and beyond them I had none.

It happened, however, when I had gone on thus for a long time, that I formed an acquaintance with a deaf gentleman, which ripened into intimacy and close companionship. To this hour, I am ignorant of his name. It is his humor to conceal it, or he has a reason and purpose for so doing. In either case I feel that he has a right to require a return of the trust he has reposed, and as he has never sought to discover my secret, I have never sought to penetrate his. There may have been something in this tacit confidence in each other, flattering and pleasant to us both, and it may have imparted in the beginning an additional zest, perhaps, to our friendship. Be this as it may, we have grown to be like brothers, and still I only know him as the deaf gentleman.

I have said that retirement has become a habit with me. When I add that the deaf gentleman and I have two friends, I communicate nothing which is inconsistent with that declaration. I spend many hours of every day in solitude and study, have no friends or change of friends but these, only see them at stated periods, and am supposed to be of a retired spirit by the very nature and object of our association.

We are men of secluded habits, with something of a cloud upon our early fortunes, whose enthusiasm, nevertheless, has not cooled with age, whose spirit of romance is not yet quenched, who are content to ramble through the world in a pleasant dream, rather than ever waken again to its harsh realities. We are alchemists who would extract the essence of perpetual youth from dust and ashes, tempt coy Truth in many light and airy forms from the bottom of her well, and discover one crumb of comfort or one grain of good in the commonest and least regarded matter that passes through our crucible. Spirits of past times, creatures of imagination, and people of to-day are alike the objects of our seeking, and, unlike the objects of search with most philosophers, we can insure their coming at our command.

The deaf gentleman and I first began to beguile our days with these fancies, and our nights in communicating them to each other. We are now four. But in my room there are six old chairs, and we have decided that the two empty seats shall always be placed at our table when we meet, to remind us that we may yet increase our company by that number, if we should find two men to our mind. When one among us dies, his chair will always be set in its usual place, but never occupied again; and I have caused my will to be so drawn out, that when we are all dead the house shall be shut up, and the vacant chairs still left in their accustomed places. It is pleasant to think that even then our shades may, perhaps, assemble together as of yore we did, and join in ghostly converse.

One night in every week, as the clock strikes ten, we meet. At the second stroke of two, I am alone.

And now shall I tell how that my old servant, besides giving us note of time, and ticking cheerful encouragement of our proceedings, lends its name to our society, which for its punctuality and my love, is christened "Master Humphrey's Clock?" Now shall I tell, how that in the bottom of the old dark closet, where the steady pendulum throbs and beats with healthy action, though the pulse of him who made it stood still long ago, and never moved again, there are piles of dusty papers constantly placed there by our hands, that we may link our enjoy-

ments with my old friend, and draw means to beguile time from the heart of time itself? Shall I, or can I, tell with what a secret pride I open this repository when we meet at night, and still find new store of pleasure in my dear old Clock!

Friend and companion of my solitude! mine is not a selfish love; I would not keep your merits to myself, but disperse something of pleasant association with your image through the whole wide world; I would have men couple with your name cheerful and healthy thoughts; I would have them believe that you keep true and honest time; and how it would gladden me to know that they recognized some hearty English work in Master Humphrey's Clock!

THE CLOCK-CASE.

It is my intention constantly to address my readers from the chimney-corner, and I would fain hope that such accounts as I shall give them of our histories and proceedings, our quiet speculations or more busy adventures, will never be unwelcome. Lest, however, I should grow prolix in the outset by lingering too long upon our little association, confounding the enthusiasm with which I regard this chief happiness of my life with that minor degree of interest which those to whom I address myself may be supposed to feel for it, I have deemed it expedient to break off as they have seen.

But, still clinging to my old friend, and naturally desirous that all its merits should be known, I am tempted to open (somewhat irregularly and against our laws, I must admit) the clock-case. The first roll of paper on which I lay my hand is in the writing of the deaf gentleman. I shall have to speak of him in my next paper, and how can I better approach that welcome task than by prefacing it with a production of his own pen, consigned to the safe keeping of my honest clock by his own hands.

The manuscript runs thus : —

INTRODUCTION TO THE GIANT CHRONICLES.

Once upon a time, that is to say, in this our time, — the exact year, month, and day are of no matter, — there dwelt in the city of London a substantial citizen, who united in his single person the dignities of wholesale fruiterer, alderman, common-councilman, and member of the worshipful company of Patten-makers : who had superadded to these extraordinary distinctions the important post and title of Sheriff, and who at length, and to

crown all, stood next in rotation for the high and honorable office of Lord Mayor.

He was a very substantial citizen indeed. His face was like the full moon in a fog, with two little holes punched out for his eyes, a very ripe pear stuck on for his nose, and a wide gash to serve for a mouth. The girth of his waistcoat was hung up and lettered in his tailor's shop as an extraordinary curiosity. He breathed like a heavy snorer, and his voice in speaking came thickly forth, as if it were oppressed and stifled by feather-beds. He trod the ground like an elephant, and eat and drank like — like nothing but an alderman, as he was.

This worthy citizen had risen to his great eminence from small beginnings. He had once been a very lean, weazen little boy, never dreaming of carrying such a weight of flesh upon his bones or of money in his pockets, and glad enough to take his dinner at a baker's door, and his tea at a pump. But he had long ago forgotten all this, as it was proper that a wholesale fruiterer, alderman, common-councilman, member of the worshipful company of Patten-makers, past sheriff, and above all, a Lord Mayor that was to be, should; and he never forgot it more completely in all his life than on the eighth of November in the year of his election to the great golden civic chair, which was the day before his grand dinner at Guildhall.

It happened that as he sat that evening all alone in his counting-house, looking over the bill of fare for next day, and checking off the fat capons in fifties and the turtle-soup by the hundred quarts for his private amusement, — it happened that as he sat alone occupied in these pleasant calculations, a strange man came in and asked him how he did, adding, "If I am half as much changed as you, sir, you have no recollection of me, I am sure."

The strange man was not over and above well dressed, and was very far from being fat or rich-looking in any sense of the word, yet he spoke with a kind of modest confidence, and assumed an easy, gentlemanly sort of an air, to which nobody but a rich man can lawfully presume. Besides this, he interrupted the good citizen just as he had reckoned three hundred and seventy-two fat capons,

and was carrying them over to the next column, and as if that were not aggravation enough, the learned recorder for the city of London had only ten minutes previously gone out at that very same door, and had turned round and said, "Good night, my lord." Yes, he had said, "my lord"; — he, a man of birth and education, of the Honorable Society of the Middle Temple, Barrister at Law, — he who had an uncle in the House of Commons, and an aunt almost but not quite in the House of Lords (for she had married a feeble peer, and made him vote as she liked), — he, this man, this learned recorder, had said, "my lord." "I'll not wait till to-morrow to give you your title, my Lord Mayor," says he, with a bow and a smile; "you are Lord Mayor *de facto*, if not *de jure*. Good night, my lord!"

The Lord Mayor elect thought of this, and turning to the stranger, and sternly bidding him "go out of his private counting-house," brought forward the three hundred and seventy-two fat capons, and went on with his account.

"Do you remember," said the other, stepping forward, — "*do* you remember little Joe Toddyhigh?"

The port wine fled for a moment from the fruiterer's nose as he muttered, "Joe Toddyhigh! What about Joe Toddyhigh?"

"I am Joe Toddyhigh," cried the visitor. "Look at me, look hard at me, — harder, harder. You know me now? You know little Joe again? What a happiness to us both, to meet the very night before your grandeur! Oh! give me your hand, Jack, — both hands, — both, for the sake of old times."

"You pinch me, sir. You're a hurting of me," said the Lord Mayor elect, pettishly. "Don't, — suppose anybody should come, — Mr. Toddyhigh, sir."

"Mr. Toddyhigh!" repeated the other ruefully.

"Oh! don't bother," said the Lord Mayor elect, scratching his head. "Dear me! Why, I thought you was dead. What a fellow you are!"

Indeed, it was a pretty state of things, and worthy the tone of vexation and disappointment in which the Lord Mayor spoke. Joe Toddyhigh had been a poor boy with him at Hull, and had oftentimes divided his last penny

and parted his last crust to relieve his wants ; for though Joe was a destitute child in those times, he was as faithful and affectionate in his friendship as ever man of might could be. They parted one day to seek their fortunes in different directions. Joe went to sea, and the now wealthy citizen begged his way to London. They separated with many tears, like foolish fellows as they were, and agreed to remain fast friends, and if they lived, soon to communicate again.

When he was an errand-boy, and even in the early days of his apprenticeship, the citizen had many a time trudged to the Post-office to ask if there were any letter from poor little Joe, and had gone home again with tears in his eyes, when he found no news of his only friend. The world is a wide place, and it was a long time before the letter came ; when it did, the writer was forgotten. It turned from white to yellow from lying in the Post-office with nobody to claim it, and in course of time was torn up with five hundred others, and sold for waste-paper. And now at last, and when it might least have been expected, here was this Joe Toddyhigh turning up and claiming acquaintance with a great public character, who on the morrow would be cracking jokes with the Prime Minister of England, and who had only, at any time during the next twelve months, to say the word, and he could shut up Temple Bar, and make it no thoroughfare for the king himself !

“ I am sure I don't know what to say, Mr. Toddyhigh,” said the Lord Mayor elect ; “ I really don't. It's very inconvenient. I'd sooner have given twenty pound, — it's very inconvenient, really.”

A thought had come into his mind, that perhaps his old friend might say something passionate which would give him an excuse for being angry himself. No such thing. Joe looked at him steadily, but very mildly, and did not open his lips.

“ Of course I shall pay you what I owe you,” said the Lord Mayor elect, fidgeting in his chair. “ You lent me — I think it was a shilling or some small coin — when we parted company, and that of course I shall pay with good interest. I can pay my way with any man, and always have done. If you look into the Mansion House

the day after to-morrow, — some time after dusk, — and ask for my private clerk, you'll find he has a draft for you. I have n't got time to say anything more just now, unless," — he hesitated, for, coupled with a strong desire to glitter for once in all his glory in the eyes of his former companion, was a distrust of his appearance, which might be more shabby than he could tell by that feeble light, — "unless you'd like to come to the dinner to-morrow. I don't mind your having this ticket, if you like to take it. A great many people would give their ears for it, I can tell you."

His old friend took the card without speaking a word, and instantly departed. His sunburnt face and gray hair were present to the citizen's mind for a moment; but by the time he reached three hundred and eighty-one fat capons, he had quite forgotten him.

Joe Toddyhigh had never been in the capital of Europe before, and he wandered up and down the streets that night amazed at the number of churches and other public buildings, the splendor of the shops, the riches that were heaped up on every side, the glare of light in which they were displayed, and the concourse of people who hurried to and fro, indifferent, apparently, to all the wonders that surrounded them. But in all the long streets and broad squares, there were none but strangers; it was quite a relief to turn down a by-way and hear his own footsteps on the pavement. He went home to his inn; thought that London was a dreary, desolate place, and felt disposed to doubt the existence of one true-hearted man in the whole worshipful company of Patten-makers. Finally, he went to bed, and dreamed that he and the Lord Mayor elect were boys again.

He went next day to the dinner, and when, in a burst of light and music, and in the midst of splendid decorations and surrounded by brilliant company, his former friend appeared at the head of the Hall, and was hailed with shouts and cheering, he cheered and shouted with the best, and for the moment could have cried. The next moment he cursed his weakness in behalf of a man so changed and selfish, and quite hated a jolly-looking old gentleman opposite for declaring himself in the pride of his heart a Patten-maker.

As the banquet proceeded, he took more and more to heart the rich citizen's unkindness; and that, not from any envy, but because he felt that a man of his state and fortune could all the better afford to recognize an old friend, even if he were poor and obscure. The more he thought of this, the more lonely and sad he felt. When the company dispersed and adjourned to the ball-room, he paced the hall and passages alone, ruminating in a very melancholy condition upon the disappointment he had experienced.

It chanced, while he was lounging about in this moody state, that he stumbled upon a flight of stairs, dark, steep, and narrow, which he ascended without any thought about the matter, and so came into a little music-gallery, empty and deserted. From this elevated post, which commanded the whole hall, he amused himself in looking down upon the attendants who were clearing away the fragments of the feast very lazily, and drinking out of all the bottles and glasses with most commendable perseverance.

His attention gradually relaxed, and he fell fast asleep.

When he awoke, he thought there must be something the matter with his eyes; but, rubbing them a little, he soon found that the moonlight was really streaming through the east window, that the lamps were all extinguished, and that he was alone. He listened, but no distant murmur in the echoing passages, not even the shutting of a door, broke the deep silence; he groped his way down the stairs, and found that the door at the bottom was locked on the other side. He began now to comprehend that he must have slept a long time, that he had been overlooked, and was shut up there for the night.

His first sensation, perhaps, was not altogether a comfortable one, for it was a dark, chilly, earthy-smelling place, and something too large, for a man so situated, to feel at home in. However, when the momentary consternation of his surprise was over, he made light of the accident, and resolved to feel his way up the stairs again, and make himself as comfortable as he could in the gallery until morning. As he turned to execute this purpose, he heard the clocks strike three.

Any such invasion of a dead stillness as the striking of

distant clocks, causes it to appear the more intense and insupportable when the sound has ceased. He listened with strained attention in the hope that some clock, lagging behind its fellows, had yet to strike, — looking all the time into the profound darkness before him until it seemed to weave itself into a black tissue, patterned with a hundred reflections of his own eyes. But the bells had all pealed out their warning for that once, and the gust of wind that moaned through the place seemed cold and heavy with their iron breath.

The time and circumstances were favorable to reflection. He tried to keep his thoughts to the current, unpleasant though it was, in which they had moved all day, and to think with what a romantic feeling he had looked forward to shaking his old friend by the hand before he died, and what a wide and cruel difference there was between the meeting they had had, and that which he had so often and so long anticipated. Still, he was disordered by waking to such sudden loneliness, and could not prevent his mind from running upon odd tales of people of undoubted courage, who, being shut up by night in vaults or churches, or other dismal places, had scaled great heights to get out, and fled from silence as they had never done from danger. This brought to his mind the moonlight through the window, and bethinking himself of it, he groped his way back up the crooked stairs, — but very stealthily, as though he were fearful of being overheard.

He was very much astonished when he approached the gallery again, to see a light in the building: still more so, on advancing hastily and looking round, to observe no visible source from which it could proceed. But how much greater yet was his astonishment at the spectacle which this light revealed.

The statues of the two giants, Gog and Magog, each above fourteen feet in height, those which succeeded to still older and more barbarous figures after the Great Fire of London, and which stand in the Guildhall to this day, were endowed with life and motion. These guardian genii of the City had quitted their pedestals, and reclined in easy attitudes in the great stained glass window. Between them was an ancient cask, which seemed to be

full of wine ; for the younger Giant, clapping his huge hand upon it, and throwing up his mighty leg, burst into an exulting laugh, which reverberated through the hall like thunder.

Joe Toddyhigh instinctively stooped down, and, more dead than alive, felt his hair stand on end, his knees knock together, and a cold damp break out upon his forehead. But even at that minute curiosity prevailed over every other feeling, and somewhat reassured by the good-humor of the Giants and their apparent unconsciousness of his presence, he crouched in a corner of the gallery, in as small a space as he could, and, peeping between the rails, observed them closely.

It was then that the elder Giant, who had a flowing gray beard, raised his thoughtful eyes to his companion's face, and in a grave and solemn voice addressed him thus :—

FIRST NIGHT OF THE GIANT CHRONICLES.

Turning towards his companion, the elder Giant uttered these words in a grave, majestic tone :—

“ Magog, does boisterous mirth beseeem the Giant Warder of this ancient city ? Is this becoming demeanor for a watchful spirit over whose bodiless head so many years have rolled, so many changes swept like empty air, — in whose impalpable nostrils the scent of blood and crime, pestilence, cruelty, and horror, has been familiar as breath to mortals, — in whose sight Time has gathered in the harvest of centuries, and garnered so many crops of human pride, affections, hopes, and sorrows ? Bethink you of our compact. The night wanes ; feasting, revelry, and music have encroached upon our usual hours of solitude, and morning will be here apace. Ere we are stricken mute again, bethink you of our compact.”

Pronouncing these latter words with more of impatience than quite accorded with his apparent age and gravity, the Giant raised a long pole (which he still bears in his hand) and tapped his brother Giant rather smartly on the head ; indeed, the blow was so smartly administered, that the latter quickly withdrew his lips from the cask to which they had been applied, and, catching up his shield and halberd, assumed an attitude of defence. His irrita-

tion was but momentary, for he laid these weapons aside as hastily as he had assumed them, and said as he did so : —

“ You know, Gog, old friend, that when we animate these shapes which the Londoners of old assigned (and not unworthily) to the guardian genii of their city, we are susceptible of some of the sensations which belong to human kind. Thus when I taste wine, I feel blows ; when I relish the one, I disrelish the other. Therefore, Gog, the more especially as your arm is none of the lightest, keep your good staff by your side, else we may chance to differ. Peace be between us.”

“ Amen ! ” said the other, leaning his staff in the window-corner. “ Why did you laugh just now ? ”

“ To think,” replied the Giant Magog, laying his hand upon the cask, “ of him who owned this wine, and kept it in a cellar hoarded from the light of day, for thirty years, — ‘ till it should be fit to drink,’ quoth he. He was twoscore and ten years old when he buried it beneath his house, and yet never thought that he might be scarcely ‘ fit to drink ’ when the wine became so. I wonder it never occurred to him to make himself unfit to be eaten. There is very little of him left by this time.”

“ The night is waning,” said Gog mournfully.

“ I know it,” replied his companion, “ and I see you are impatient. But look. Through the eastern window — placed opposite to us, that the first beams of the rising sun may every morning gild our giant faces — the moon-rays fall upon the pavement in a stream of light that to my fancy sinks through the cold stone and gushes into the old crypt below. The night is scarcely past its noon, and our great charge is sleeping heavily.”

They ceased to speak, and looked upward at the moon. The sight of their large, black, rolling eyes filled Joe Toddyhigh with such horror that he could scarcely draw his breath. Still they took no note of him, and appeared to believe themselves quite alone.

“ Our compact,” said Magog after a pause, “ is, if I understand it, that, instead of watching here in silence through the dreary nights, we entertain each other with stories of our past experience ; with tales of the past, the present, and the future ; with legends of London and

her sturdy citizens from the old simple times. That every night at midnight, when Saint Paul's bell tolls out one, and we may move and speak, we thus discourse, nor leave such themes till the first gray gleam of day shall strike us dumb. Is that our bargain, brother?"

"Yes," said the Giant Gog, "that is the league between us who guard this city, by day in spirit, and by night in body also; and never on ancient holidays have its conduits run wine more merrily than we will pour forth our legendary lore. We are old chroniclers from this time hence. The crumbled walls encircle us once more, the postern gates are closed, the drawbridge is up, and pent in its narrow den beneath, the water foams and struggles with the sunken starlings. Jerkins and quarter-staves are in the streets again, the nightly watch is set, the rebel, sad and lonely in his Tower dungeon, tries to sleep and weeps for home and children. Aloft upon the gates and walls are noble heads glaring fiercely down upon the dreaming city, and vexing the hungry dogs that scent them in the air, and tear the ground beneath with dismal howlings. The axe, the block, the rack, in their dark chambers give signs of recent use. The Thames, floating past long lines of cheerful windows whence comes a burst of music and a stream of light, bears sullenly to the Palace wall the last red stain brought on the tide from Traitor's Gate. But your pardon, brother. The night wears, and I am talking idly."

The other Giant appeared to be entirely of this opinion, for during the foregoing rhapsody of his fellow-sentinel he had been scratching his head with an air of comical uneasiness, or rather with an air that would have been very comical if he had been a dwarf or an ordinary-sized man. He winked, too, and though it could not be doubted for a moment that he winked to himself, still he certainly cocked his enormous eye towards the gallery where the listener was concealed. Nor was this all, for he gaped; and when he gaped, Joe was horribly reminded of the popular prejudice on the subject of giants, and of their fabled power of smelling out Englishmen, however closely concealed.

His alarm was such that he nearly swooned, and it was some little time before his power of sight or hearing

was restored. When he recovered he found that the elder Giant was pressing the younger to commence the Chronicles, and that the latter was endeavoring to excuse himself, on the ground that the night was far spent and it would be better to wait until the next. Well assured by this that he was certainly about to begin directly, the listener collected his faculties by a great effort, and distinctly heard Magog express himself to the following effect:—

In the sixteenth century and in the reign of Queen Elizabeth of glorious memory (albeit her golden days are sadly rusted with blood), there lived in the city of London a bold young 'prentice who loved his master's daughter. There were no doubt within the walls a great many 'prentices in this condition, but I speak of only one, and his name was Hugh Graham.

This Hugh was apprenticed to an honest Bowyer who dwelt in the ward of Cheype, and was rumored to possess great wealth. Rumor was quite as infallible in those days as at the present time, but it happened then as now to be sometimes right by accident. It stumbled upon the truth when it gave the old Bowyer a mint of money. His trade had been a profitable one in the time of King Henry the Eighth, who encouraged English archery to the utmost, and he had been prudent and discreet. Thus it came to pass that Mistress Alice, his only daughter, was the richest heiress in all his wealthy ward. Young Hugh had often maintained with staff and cudgel that she was the handsomest. To do him justice, I believe she was.

If he could have gained the heart of pretty Mistress Alice by knocking this conviction into stubborn people's heads, Hugh would have had no cause to fear. But though the Bowyer's daughter smiled in secret to hear of his doughty deeds for her sake, and though her little waiting-woman reported all her smiles (and many more) to Hugh, and though he was at a vast expense in kisses and small coin to recompense her fidelity, he made no progress in his love. He durst not whisper it to Mistress Alice save on sure encouragement, and that she never gave him. A glance of her dark eye as she sat at the door on a summer's evening after prayer-time, while he and the neighboring 'prentices exercised themselves in

the street with blunted sword and buckler, would fire Hugh's blood so that none could stand before him; but then she glanced at others quite as kindly as on him, and where was the use of cracking crowns if Mistress Alice smiled upon the cracked as well as on the cracker?

Still Hugh went on, and loved her more and more. He thought of her all day, and dreamed of her all night long. He treasured up her every word and gesture, and had a palpitation of the heart whenever he heard her footstep on the stairs or her voice in an adjoining room. To him, the old Bowyer's house was haunted by an angel; there was enchantment in the air and space in which she moved. It would have been no miracle to Hugh if flowers had sprung from the rush-strewn floors beneath the tread of lovely Mistress Alice.

Never did 'prentice long to distinguish himself in the eyes of his lady-love so ardently as Hugh. Sometimes he pictured to himself the house taking fire by night, and he, when all drew back in fear, rushing through flame and smoke and bearing her from the ruins in his arms. At other times he thought of a rising of fierce rebels, an attack upon the city, a strong assault upon the Bowyer's house in particular, and he falling on the threshold pierced with numberless wounds in defence of Mistress Alice. If he could only enact some prodigy of valor, do some wonderful deed, and let her know that she had inspired it, he thought he could die contented.

Sometimes the Bowyer and his daughter would go out to supper with a worthy citizen at the fashionable hour of six o'clock, and on such occasions Hugh, wearing his blue 'prentice cloak as gallantly as 'prentice might, would attend with a lantern and his trusty club to escort them home. These were the brightest moments of his life. To hold the light while Mistress Alice picked her steps, to touch her hand as he helped her over broken ways, to have her leaning on his arm, — it sometimes even came to that, — this was happiness indeed!

When the nights were fair, Hugh followed in the rear, his eyes riveted on the graceful figure of the Bowyer's daughter as she and the old man moved on before him. So they threaded the narrow winding streets of the city, now passing beneath the overhanging gables of old

wooden houses whence creaking signs projected into the street, and now emerging from some dark and frowning gateway into the clear moonlight. At such times, or when the shouts of straggling brawlers met her ear, the Bowyer's daughter would look timidly back at Hugh beseeching him to draw nearer ; and then how he grasped his club and longed to do battle with a dozen rufflers, for the love of Mistress Alice !

The old Bowyer was in the habit of lending money on interest to the gallants of the Court, and thus it happened that many a richly dressed gentleman dismounted at his door. More waving plumes and gallant steeds, indeed, were seen at the Bowyer's house, and more embroidered silks and velvets sparkled in his dark shop and darker private closet than at any merchant's in the city. In those times no less than in the present it would seem that the richest looking cavaliers often wanted money the most.

Of these glittering clients there was one who always came alone. He was always nobly mounted, and, having no attendant, gave his horse in charge to Hugh while he and the Bowyer were closeted within. Once as he sprung into the saddle Mistress Alice was seated at an upper window, and before she could withdraw he had doffed his jewelled cap and kissed his hand. Hugh watched him caracoling down the street, and burnt with indignation. But how much deeper was the glow that reddened in his cheeks when, raising his eyes to the casement, he saw that Alice watched the stranger too !

He came again and often, each time arrayed more gayly than before, and still the little casement showed him Mistress Alice. At length one heavy day, she fled from home. It had cost her a hard struggle, for all her old father's gifts were strewn about her chamber as if she had parted from them one by one, and knew that the time must come when these tokens of his love would wring her heart, — yet she was gone.

She left a letter commending her poor father to the care of Hugh, and wishing he might be happier than he could ever have been with her, for he deserved the love of a better and a purer heart than she had to bestow. The old man's forgiveness (she said) she had no power

to ask, but she prayed God to bless him, — and so ended with a blot upon the paper where her tears had fallen.

At first the old man's wrath was kindled, and he carried his wrong to the Queen's throne itself; but there was no redress he learnt at Court, for his daughter had been conveyed abroad. This afterwards appeared to be the truth, as there came from France, after an interval of several years, a letter in her hand. It was written in trembling characters, and almost illegible. Little could be made out save that she often thought of home and her old dear pleasant room, — and that she had dreamt her father was dead and had not blessed her, — and that her heart was breaking.

The poor old Bowyer lingered on, never suffering Hugh to quit his sight, for he knew now that he had loved his daughter, and that was the only link that bound him to earth. It broke at length and he died, bequeathing his old 'prentice his trade and all his wealth, and solemnly charging him with his last breath to revenge his child if ever he who had worked her misery crossed his path in life again.

From the time of Alice's flight, the tilting-ground, the fields, the fencing-school, the summer-evening sports, knew Hugh no more. His spirit was dead within him. He rose to great eminence and repute among the citizens, but was seldom seen to smile, and never mingled in their revelries or rejoicings. Brave, humane, and generous, he was beloved by all. He was pitied too by those who knew his story, and these were so many that when he walked along the streets alone at dusk, even the rude common people doffed their caps and mingled a rough air of sympathy with their respect.

One night in May — it was her birthnight and twenty years since she had left her home — Hugh Graham sat in the room she had hallowed in his boyish days. He was now a gray-haired man, though still in the prime of life. Old thoughts had borne him company for many hours, and the chamber had gradually grown quite dark, when he was roused by a low knocking at the outer door.

He hastened down, and opening it saw by the light of a lamp which he had seized upon the way, a female figure crouching in the portal. It hurried swiftly past

him and glided up the stairs. He looked for pursuers. There were none in sight. No, not one.

He was inclined to think it a vision of his own brain, when suddenly a vague suspicion of the truth flashed upon his mind. He barred the door and hastened wildly back. Yes, there she was, — there, in the chamber he had quitted, — there in her old innocent happy home, so changed that none but he could trace one gleam of what she had been, — there upon her knees, — with her hands clasped in agony and shame before her burning face.

“My God, my God!” she cried, “now strike me dead! Though I have brought death and shame and sorrow on this roof, oh, let me die at home in mercy!”

There was no tear upon her face then, but she trembled and glanced round the chamber. Everything was in its old place. Her bed looked as if she had risen from it but that morning. The sight of these familiar objects, marking the dear remembrance in which she had been held, and the blight she had brought upon herself, was more than the woman's better nature that had carried her there could bear. She wept and fell upon the ground.

A rumor was spread about, in a few days' time, that the Bowyer's cruel daughter had come home, and that Master Graham had given her lodging in his house. It was rumored too that he had resigned her fortune, in order that she might bestow it in acts of charity, and that he had vowed to guard her in her solitude, but that they were never to see each other more. These rumors greatly incensed all virtuous wives and daughters in the ward, especially when they appeared to receive some corroboration from the circumstance of Master Graham taking up his abode in another tenement hard by. The estimation in which he was held, however, forbade any questioning on the subject; and as the Bowyer's house was close shut up, and nobody came forth when public shows and festivities were in progress, or to flaunt in the public walks, or to buy new fashions at the mercers' booths, all the well-conducted females agreed among themselves that there could be no woman there.

These reports had scarcely died away when the won-

der of every good citizen, male and female, was utterly absorbed and swallowed up by a Royal Proclamation, in which her Majesty, strongly censuring the practice of wearing long Spanish rapiers of preposterous length (as being a bullying and swaggering custom, tending to bloodshed and public disorder), commanded that on a particular day therein named, certain grave citizens should repair to the city gates, and there, in public, break all rapiers worn or carried by persons claiming admission, that exceeded, though it were only by a quarter of an inch, three standard feet in length.

Royal Proclamations usually take their course, let the public wonder never so much. On the appointed day two citizens of high repute took up their stations at each of the gates, attended by a party of the city guard, the main body to enforce the Queen's will, and take custody of all such rebels (if any) as might have the temerity to dispute it; and a few to bear the standard measures and instruments for reducing all unlawful sword-blades to the prescribed dimensions. In pursuance of these arrangements, Master Graham and another were posted at Lud Gate, on the hill before Saint Paul's.

A pretty numerous company were gathered together at this spot, for, besides the officers in attendance to enforce the proclamation, there was a motley crowd of lookers-on of various degrees, who raised from time to time such shouts and cries as the circumstances called forth. A spruce young courtier was the first who approached; he unsheathed a weapon of burnished steel that shone and glistened in the sun, and handed it with the newest air to the officer, who, finding it exactly three feet long, returned it with a bow. Thereupon the gallant raised his hat and crying, "God save the Queen," passed on amidst the plaudits of the mob. Then came another — a better courtier still — who wore a blade but two feet long, whereat the people laughed, much to the disparagement of his honor's dignity. Then came a third, a sturdy old officer of the army, girded with a rapier at least a foot and a half beyond her Majesty's pleasure; at him they raised a great shout, and most of the spectators (but especially those who were armorers or cutlers) laughed very heartily at the breakage which

would ensue. But they were disappointed, for the old campaigner, coolly unbuckling his sword and bidding his servant carry it home again, passed through unarmed to the great indignation of all the beholders. They relieved themselves in some degree by hooting a tall blustering fellow with a prodigious weapon, who stopped short on coming in sight of the preparations, and after a little consideration turned back again; but all this time no rapier had been broken although it was high noon, and all cavaliers of any quality or appearance were taking their way towards Saint Paul's churchyard.

During these proceedings Master Graham had stood apart, strictly confining himself to the duty imposed upon him, and taking little heed of anything beyond. He stepped forward now as a richly dressed gentleman on foot, followed by a single attendant, was seen advancing up the hill.

As this person drew nearer, the crowd stopped their clamor, and bent forward with eager looks. Master Graham standing alone in the gateway, and the stranger coming slowly towards him, they seemed, as it were, set face to face. The nobleman (for he looked one) had a haughty and disdainful air, which bespoke the slight estimation in which he held the citizen. The citizen, on the other hand, preserved the resolute bearing of one who was not to be frowned down or daunted, and who cared very little for any nobility but that of worth and manhood. It was perhaps some consciousness on the part of each, of these feelings in the other, that infused a more stern expression into their regards as they came closer together.

"Your rapier, worthy sir!"

At the instant that he pronounced these words Graham started, and falling back some paces, laid his hand upon the dagger in his belt.

"You are the man whose horse I used to hold before the Bowyer's door? You are that man? Speak!"

"Out, you 'prentice hound!" said the other.

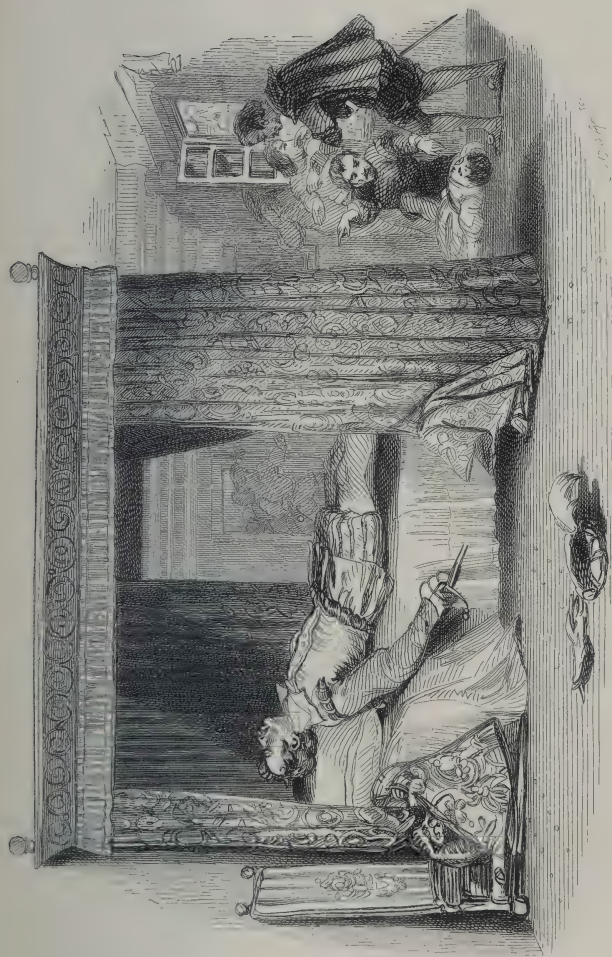
"You are he! I know you well now!" cried Graham. "Let no man step between us two, or I shall be his murderer." With that he drew his dagger and rushed in upon him.

The stranger had drawn his weapon from the scabbard ready for the scrutiny, before a word was spoken. He made a thrust at his assailant, but the dagger which Graham clutched in his left hand being the dirk in use at that time for parrying such blows, promptly turned the point aside. They closed. The dagger fell rattling upon the ground, and Graham, wresting his adversary's sword from his grasp, plunged it through his heart. As he drew it out it snapped in two, leaving a fragment in the dead man's body.

All this passed so swiftly that the bystanders looked on without an effort to interfere; but the man was no sooner down than an uproar broke forth which rent the air. The attendant rushing through the gate proclaimed that his master, a nobleman, had been set upon and slain by a citizen; the word quickly spread from mouth to mouth; Saint Paul's Cathedral, and every book shop, ordinary, and smoking-house in the churchyard poured out its stream of cavaliers and their followers, who, mingling together in a dense tumultuous body, struggled, sword in hand, towards the spot.

With equal impetuosity, and stimulating each other by loud cries and shouts, the citizens and common people took up the quarrel on their side, and encircling Master Graham a hundred deep, forced him from the gate. In vain he waved the broken sword above his head, crying that he would die on London's threshold for their sacred homes. They bore him on, and ever keeping him in the midst so that no man could attack him, fought their way into the city.

The clash of swords and roar of voices, the dust and heat and pressure, the trampling under foot of men, the distracted looks and shrieks of women at the windows above as they recognized their relatives or lovers in the crowd, the rapid tolling of alarm-bells, the furious rage and passion of the scene, were fearful. Those who, being on the outskirts of each crowd, could use their weapons with effect, fought desperately, while those behind, maddened with baffled rage, struck at each other over the heads of those before them, and crushed their own fellows. Wherever the broken sword was seen above the people's heads, towards that spot the cavaliers made



a new rush. Every one of these charges was marked by sudden gaps in the throng where men were trodden down, but as fast as they were made, the tide swept over them, and still the multitude pressed on again, a confused mass of swords, clubs, staves, broken plumes, fragments of rich cloaks and doublets, and angry bleeding faces, all mixed up together in inextricable disorder.

The design of the people was to force Master Graham to take refuge in his dwelling, and to defend it until the authorities could interfere or they could gain time for parley. But either from ignorance or in the confusion of the moment they stopped at his old house, which was closely shut. Some time was lost in beating the doors open and passing him to the front. About a score of the boldest of the other party threw themselves into the torrent while this was being done, and reaching the door at the same moment with himself cut him off from his defenders.

"I never will turn in such a righteous cause, so help me Heaven!" cried Graham, in a voice that at last made itself heard, and confronting them as he spoke. "Least of all will I turn upon this threshold which owes its desolation to such men as ye. I give no quarter, and I will have none! Strike!"

For a moment they stood at bay. At that moment a shot from an unseen hand, apparently fired by some person who had gained access to one of the opposite houses, struck Graham in the brain, and he fell dead. A low wail was heard in the air,—many people in the concourse cried that they had seen a spirit glide across the little casement window of the Bowyer's house—

A dead silence succeeded. After a short time some of the flushed and heated throng laid down their arms and softly carried the body within doors. Others fell off or slunk away in knots of two or three, others whispered together in groups, and before a numerous guard which then rode up could muster in the street, it was nearly empty.

Those who carried Master Graham to the bed upstairs were shocked to see a woman lying beneath the window with her hands clasped together. After trying to recover her in vain, they laid her near the citizen,

who still retained, tightly grasped in his right hand, the first and last sword that was broken that day at Lud Gate.

The Giant uttered these concluding words with sudden precipitation, and on the instant the strange light which had filled the hall faded away. Joe Toddyhigh glanced involuntarily at the eastern window and saw the first pale gleam of morning. He turned his head again towards the other window in which the Giants had been seated. It was empty. The cask of wine was gone, and he could dimly make out that the two great figures stood mute and motionless upon their pedestals.

After rubbing his eyes and wondering for full half an hour, during which time he observed morning come creeping on apace, he yielded to the drowsiness which overpowered him and fell into a refreshing slumber. When he awoke it was broad day; the building was open, and workmen were busily engaged in removing the vestiges of last night's feast.

Stealing gently down the little stairs and assuming the air of some early loungee who had dropped in from the street, he walked up to the foot of each pedestal in turn, and attentively examined the figure it supported. There could be no doubt about the features of either; he recollected the exact expression they had worn at different passages of their conversation, and recognized in every line and lineament the Giants of the night. Assured that it was no vision, but that he had heard and seen with his own proper senses, he walked forth, determining at all hazards to conceal himself in the Guildhall again that evening. He further resolved to sleep all day, so that he might be very wakeful and vigilant, and above all that he might take notice of the figures at the precise moment of their becoming animated and subsiding into their old state, which he greatly reproached himself for not having done already.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO MASTER HUMPHREY.

"SIR, — Before you proceed any further in your account of your friends and what you say and do when you meet together, excuse me if I proffer my claim to be elected to one of the vacant chairs in that old room of yours. Don't reject me without full consideration, for if you do you'll be sorry for it afterwards, — you will upon my life.

"I inclose my card, sir, in this letter. I never was ashamed of my name, and I never shall be. I am considered a devilish gentlemanly fellow, and I act up to the character. If you want a reference, ask any of the men at our club. Ask any fellow who goes there to write his letters, what sort of conversation mine is. Ask him if he thinks I have the sort of voice that will suit your deaf friend and make him hear, if he can hear anything at all. Ask the servants what they think of me. There's not a rascal among 'em, sir, but will tremble to hear my name. That reminds me — don't you say too much about that housekeeper of yours ; it's a low subject, damned low.

"I tell you what, sir. If you vote me into one of those empty chairs, you'll have among you a man with a fund of gentlemanly information that'll rather astonish you. I can let you into a few anecdotes about some fine women of title, that are quite high life, sir, — the tiptop sort of thing. I know the name of every man who has been out on an affair of honor within the last five-and-twenty years ; I know the private particulars of every cross and squabble that has taken place upon the turf, at the gaming-table, or elsewhere, during the whole of that time. I have been called the gentlemanly chronicle. You may consider yourself a lucky dog ;

upon my soul you may congratulate yourself, though I say so.

"It's an uncommon good notion that of yours, not letting anybody know where you live. I have tried it, but there has always been an anxiety respecting me which has found me out. Your deaf friend is a cunning fellow to keep his name so close. I have tried that too, but have always failed. I shall be proud to make his acquaintance, — tell him so, with my compliments.

"You must have been a queer fellow when you were a child, confounded queer. It's odd all that about the picture in your first paper, — prosy, but told in a devilish gentlemanly sort of way. In places like that, I could come in with great effect with a touch of life, — Don't you feel that?

"I am anxiously waiting for your next paper to know whether your friends live upon the premises, and at your expense, which I take it for granted is the case. If I am right in this impression, I know a charming fellow (an excellent companion and most delightful company) who will be proud to join you. Some years ago he seconded a great many prize-fighters, and once fought an amateur match himself; since then he has driven several mails, broken at different periods all the lamps on the right-hand side of Oxford Street, and six times carried away every bell-handle in Bloomsbury Square, besides turning off the gas in various thoroughfares. In point of gentlemanliness he is unrivalled, and I should say that next to myself he is of all men the best suited to your purpose.

"Expecting your reply,

"I am,

"&c., &c."

Master Humphrey informs this gentleman that his application, both as it concerns himself and his friend, is rejected.

MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK.

II.

MASTER HUMPHREY, FROM HIS CLOCK-SIDE IN THE CHIMNEY-CORNER.

My old companion tells me it is midnight. The fire glows brightly, crackling with a sharp and cheerful sound, as if it loved to burn. The merry cricket on the hearth (my constant visitor), this ruddy blaze, my clock, and I, seem to share the world among us, and to be the only things awake. The wind, high and boisterous but now, has died away and hoarsely mutters in its sleep. I love all times and seasons each in its turn, and am apt, perhaps, to think the present one the best; but past or coming I always love this peaceful time of night, when long-buried thoughts, favored by the gloom and silence, steal from their graves, and haunt the scenes of faded happiness and hope.

The popular faith in ghosts has a remarkable affinity with the whole current of our thoughts at such an hour as this, and seems to be their necessary and natural consequence. For who can wonder that man should feel a vague belief in tales of disembodied spirits wandering through those places which they once dearly affected, when he himself, scarcely less separated from his old world than they, is forever lingering upon past emotions and bygone times, and hovering, the ghost of his former self, about the places and people that warmed his heart of old? It is thus that at this quiet hour I haunt the house where I was born, the rooms I used to tread, the scenes of my infancy, my boyhood, and my youth; it is thus that I prowl around my buried treasure (though not of gold or silver) and mourn my loss; it is thus that I revisit the ashes of extinguished fires, and take my

silent stand at old bedsides. If my spirit should ever glide back to this chamber when my body is mingled with the dust, it will but follow the course it often took in the old man's lifetime, and add but one more change to the subjects of its contemplation.

In all my idle speculations I am greatly assisted by various legends connected with my venerable house, which are current in the neighborhood, and are so numerous that there is scarce a cupboard or corner that has not some dismal story of its own. When I first entertained thoughts of becoming its tenant I was assured that it was haunted from roof to cellar, and I believe the bad opinion in which my neighbors once held me had its rise in my not being torn to pieces, or at least distracted with terror, on the night I took possession; in either of which cases I should doubtless have arrived by a short cut at the very summit of popularity.

But traditions and rumors all taken into account, who so abets me in every fancy and chimes with my every thought, as my dear deaf friend; and how often have I cause to bless the day that brought us two together! Of all days in the year I rejoice to think that it should have been Christmas Day, with which from childhood we associate something friendly, hearty, and sincere.

I had walked out to cheer myself with the happiness of others, and, in the little tokens of festivity and rejoicing, of which the streets and houses present so many upon that day, had lost some hours. Now I stopped to look at a merry party hurrying through the snow on foot to their place of meeting, and now turned back to see a whole coachful of children safely deposited at the welcome house. At one time, I admired how carefully the workingman carried the baby in its gaudy hat and feathers, and how his wife, trudging patiently on behind, forgot even her care of her gay clothes, in exchanging greetings with the child as it crowed and laughed over the father's shoulder; at another, I pleased myself with some passing scene of gallantry or courtship, and was glad to believe that for a season half the world of poverty was gay.

As the day closed in, I still rambled through the streets, feeling a companionship in the bright fires that

cast their warm reflection on the windows as I passed, and losing all sense of my own loneliness in imagining the sociality and kind-fellowship that everywhere prevailed. At length I happened to stop before a Tavern, and, encountering a Bill of Fare in the window, it all at once brought it into my head to wonder what kind of people dined alone in Taverns upon Christmas Day.

Solitary men are accustomed, I suppose, unconsciously to look upon solitude as their own peculiar property. I had sat alone in my room on many, many anniversaries of this great holiday, and had never regarded it but as one of universal assemblage and rejoicing. I had expected, and with an aching heart, a crowd of prisoners and beggars, but *these* were not the men for whom the Tavern doors were open. Had they any customers or was it a mere form?—a form no doubt.

Trying to feel quite sure of this, I walked away, but before I had gone many paces, I stopped and looked back. There was a provoking air of business in the lamp above the door which I could not overcome. I began to be afraid there might be many customers, — young men perhaps struggling with the world, utter strangers in this great place, whose friends lived at a long distance off, and whose means were too slender to enable them to make the journey. The supposition gave rise to so many distressing little pictures, that, in preference to carrying them home with me, I determined to encounter the realities. So I turned, and walked in.

I was at once glad and sorry to find that there was only one person in the dining-room; glad to know that there were not more, and sorry that he should be there by himself. He did not look so old as I, but like me he was advanced in life, and his hair was nearly white. Though I made more noise in entering and seating myself than was quite necessary, with the view of attracting his attention and saluting him in the good old form of that time of year, he did not raise his head but sat with it resting on his hand, musing over his half-finished meal.

I called for something which would give me an excuse for remaining in the room (I had dined early, as my housekeeper was engaged at night to partake of some

friend's good cheer), and sat where I could observe without intruding on him. After a time he looked up. He was aware that somebody had entered, but could see very little of me as I sat in the shade and he in the light. He was sad and thoughtful, and I forbore to trouble him by speaking.

Let me believe that it was something better than curiosity which riveted my attention and impelled me strongly towards this gentleman. I never saw so patient and kind a face. He should have been surrounded by friends, and yet here he sat dejected and alone when all men had their friends about them. As often as he roused himself from his revery he would fall into it again, and it was plain that whatever were the subject of his thoughts they were of a melancholy kind, and would not be controlled.

He was not used to solitude. I was sure of that, for I know by myself that if he had been, his manner would have been different, and he would have taken some slight interest in the arrival of another. I could not fail to mark that he had no appetite; that he tried to eat in vain; that time after time the plate was pushed away, and he relapsed into his former posture.

His mind was wandering among old Christmas Days, I thought. Many of them sprung up together, not with a long gap between each, but in unbroken succession like days of the week. It was a great change to find himself for the first time (I quite settled that it *was* the first) in an empty silent room with no soul to care for. I could not help following him in imagination through crowds of pleasant faces, and then coming back to that dull place with its bough of mistletoe sickening in the gas, and sprigs of holly parched up already by a Simoom of roast and boiled. The very waiter had gone home, and his representative, a poor, lean, hungry man, was keeping Christmas in his jacket.

I grew still more interested in my friend. His dinner done, a decanter of wine was placed before him. It remained untouched for a long time, but at length with a quivering hand he filled a glass and raised it to his lips. Some tender wish to which he had been accustomed to give utterance on that day, or some beloved name that he had been used to pledge, trembled upon them at the

moment. He put it down very hastily — took it up once more — again put it down — pressed his hand upon his face — yes — and tears stole down his cheeks, I am certain.

Without pausing to consider whether I did right or wrong, I stepped across the room, and sitting down beside him laid my hand gently on his arm.

“My friend,” I said, “forgive me if I beseech you to take comfort and consolation from the lips of an old man. I will not preach to you what I have not practised, indeed. Whatever be your grief, be of a good heart, — be of a good heart, pray!”

“I see that you speak earnestly,” he replied, “and kindly I am very sure, but —”

I nodded my head to show that I understood what he would say, for I had already gathered from a certain fixed expression in his face, and from the attention with which he watched me while I spoke, that his sense of hearing was destroyed. “There should be a freemasonry between us,” said I, pointing from himself to me to explain my meaning; “if not in our gray hairs, at least in our misfortunes. You see that I am but a poor cripple.”

I never felt so happy under my affliction since the trying moment of my first becoming conscious of it, as when he took my hand in his with a smile that has lighted my path in life from that day, and we sat down side by side.

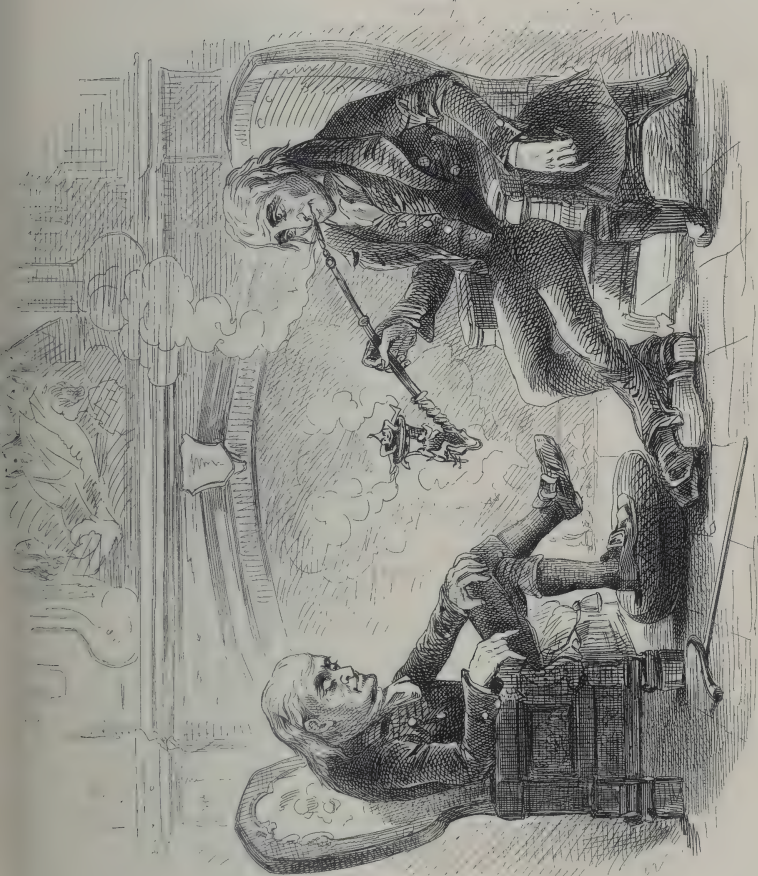
This was the beginning of my friendship with the deaf gentleman, and when was ever the slight and easy service of a kind word in season repaid by such attachment and devotion as he has shown to me!

He produced a little set of tablets and a pencil to facilitate our conversation, on that our first acquaintance, and I well remember how awkward and constrained I was in writing down my share of the dialogue, and how easily he guessed my meaning before I had written half of what I had to say. He told me in a faltering voice that he had not been accustomed to be alone on that day, — that it had always been a little festival with him, — and seeing that I glanced at his dress in the expectation that he wore mourning, he added hastily that it was not

that ; if it had been, he thought he could have borne it better. From that time to the present we have never touched upon this theme. Upon every return of the same day we have been together, and although we make it our annual custom to drink to each other hand in hand after dinner, and to recall with affectionate garrulity every circumstance of our first meeting, we always avoid this one as if by mutual consent.

Meantime we have gone on strengthening in our friendship and regard, and forming an attachment which, I trust and believe, will only be interrupted by death, to be renewed in another existence. I scarcely know how we communicate as we do, but he has long since ceased to be deaf to me. He is frequently the companion of my walks, and even in crowded streets replies to my slightest look or gesture as though he could read my thoughts. From the vast number of objects which pass in rapid succession before our eyes, we frequently select the same for some particular notice or remark ; and when one of these little coincidences occurs, I cannot describe the pleasure which animates my friend, or the beaming countenance he will preserve for half an hour afterwards at least.

He is a great thinker from living so much within himself, and having a lively imagination, has a facility of conceiving and enlarging upon odd ideas, which renders him invaluable to our little body, and greatly astonishes our two friends. His powers in this respect are much assisted by a large pipe, which he assures us once belonged to a German Student. Be this as it may, it has undoubtedly a very ancient and mysterious appearance, and is of such capacity that it takes three hours and a half to smoke it out. I have reason to believe that my barber, who is the chief authority of a knot of gossips, who congregate every evening at a small tobacconist's hard by, has related anecdotes of this pipe and the grim figures that are carved upon its bowl at which all the smokers in the neighborhood have stood aghast ; and I know that my housekeeper, while she holds it in high veneration, has a superstitious feeling connected with it which would render her exceedingly unwilling to be left alone in its company after dark.



Whatever sorrow my deaf friend has known, and whatever grief may linger in some secret corner of his heart, he is now a cheerful, placid, happy creature. Misfortune can never have fallen upon such a man but for some good purpose ; and when I see its traces in his gentle nature and his earnest feeling, I am the less disposed to murmur at such trials as I may have undergone myself. With regard to the pipe, I have a theory of my own ; I cannot help thinking that it is in some manner connected with the event that brought us together, for I remember that it was a long time before he even talked about it ; that when he did, he grew reserved and melancholy ; and that it was a long time yet before he brought it forth. I have no curiosity, however, upon this subject, for I know that it promotes his tranquillity and comfort, and I need no other inducement to regard it with my utmost favor.

Such is the deaf gentleman. I can call up his figure now, clad in sober gray, and seated in the chimney-corner. As he puffs out the smoke from his favorite pipe he casts a look on me brimful of cordiality and friendship, and says all manner of kind and genial things in a cheerful smile ; then he raises his eyes to my clock which is just about to strike, and glancing from it to me and back again, seems to divide his heart between us. For myself, it is not too much to say that I would gladly part with one of my poor limbs, could he but hear the old clock's voice.

Of our two friends the first has been all his life one of that easy, wayward, truant class whom the world is accustomed to designate as nobody's enemies but their own. Bred to a profession for which he never qualified himself, and reared in the expectation of a fortune he has never inherited, he has undergone every vicissitude of which such an existence is capable. He and his younger brother, both orphans from their childhood, were educated by a wealthy relative who taught them to expect an equal division of his property ; but too indolent to court, and too honest to flatter, the elder gradually lost ground in the affections of a capricious old man, and the younger, who did not fail to improve his opportunity, now triumphs in the possession of enormous

wealth. His triumph is to hoard it in solitary wretchedness, and probably to feel with the expenditure of every shilling a greater pang than the loss of his whole inheritance ever cost his brother.

Jack Redburn — he was Jack Redburn at the first little school he went to where every other child was mastered and surnamed, and he has been Jack Redburn all his life, or he would perhaps have been a richer man by this time — has been an inmate of my house these eight years past. He is my librarian, secretary, steward, and first minister; director of all my affairs and inspector-general of my household. He is something of a musician, something of an author, something of an actor, something of a painter, very much of a carpenter, and an extraordinary gardener; having had all his life a wonderful aptitude for learning everything that was of no use to him. He is remarkably fond of children, and is the best and kindest nurse in sickness that ever drew the breath of life. He has mixed with every grade of society and known the utmost distress, but there never was a less selfish, a more tender-hearted, a more enthusiastic, or a more guileless man; and I dare say if few have done less good, fewer still have done less harm in the world than he. By what chance Nature forms such whimsical jumbles I don't know, but I do know that she sends them among us very often, and that the king of the whole race is Jack Redburn.

I should be puzzled to say how old he is. His health is none of the best, and he wears a quantity of iron-gray hair which shades his face and gives it rather a worn appearance; but we consider him quite a young fellow notwithstanding, and if a youthful spirit surviving the roughest contact with the world confers upon its possessor any title to be considered young, then he is a mere child. The only interruptions to his careless cheerfulness are on a wet Sunday, when he is apt to be unusually religious and solemn, and sometimes of an evening when he has been blowing a very slow tune on the flute. On these last-named occasions he is apt to incline towards the mysterious or the terrible. As a specimen of his powers in this mood, I refer my readers to the extract from the clock-case which follows this paper: he brought it to me

not long ago at midnight, and informed me that the main incident had been suggested by a dream of the night before.

His apartments are two cheerful rooms looking towards the garden, and one of his great delights is to arrange and rearrange the furniture in these chambers and put it in every possible variety of position. During the whole time he has been here, I do not think he has slept for two nights running with the head of his bed in the same place, and every time he moves it is to be the last. My housekeeper was at first wellnigh distracted by these frequent changes, but she has become quite reconciled to them by degrees, and has so fallen in with his humor that they often consult together with great gravity upon the next final alteration. Whatever his arrangements are, however, they are always a pattern of neatness, and every one of the manifold articles connected with his manifold occupations, is to be found in its own particular place. Until within the last two or three years he was subject to an occasional fit (which usually came upon him in very fine weather), under the influence of which he would dress himself with peculiar care, and going out under pretence of taking a walk, disappear for several days together. At length after the interval between each outbreak of this disorder had gradually grown longer and longer, it wholly disappeared, and now he seldom stirs abroad except to stroll out a little way on a summer's evening. Whether he yet mistrusts his own constancy in this respect, and is therefore afraid to wear a coat, I know not ; but we seldom see him in any other upper garment than an old spectral-looking dressing-gown with very disproportionate pockets, full of a miscellaneous collection of odd matters which he picks up wherever he can lay his hands upon them.

Everything that is a favorite with our friend is a favorite with us, and thus it happens that the fourth among us is Mr. Owen Miles, a most worthy gentleman who had treated Jack with great kindness before my deaf friend and I encountered him by an accident, to which I may refer on some future occasion. Mr. Miles was once a very rich merchant, but receiving a severe shock in the death of his wife, he retired from business and de-

voted himself to a quiet, unostentatious life. He is an excellent man of thoroughly sterling character : not of quick apprehension, and not without some amusing prejudices, which I shall leave to their own development. He holds us all in profound veneration, but Jack Redburn he esteems as a kind of pleasant wonder, that he may venture to approach familiarly. He believes, not only that no man ever lived who could do so many things as Jack, but that no man ever lived who could do anything so well ; and he never calls my attention to any of his ingenious proceedings but he whispers in my ear, nudging me at the same time with his elbow, — “ If he had only made it his trade, sir, — if he had only made it his trade ! ”

They are inseparable companions ; one would almost suppose that although Mr. Miles never by any chance does anything in the way of assistance, Jack could do nothing without him. Whether he is reading, writing, painting, carpentering, gardening, flute-playing, or what not, there is Mr. Miles beside him, buttoned up to the chin in his blue coat, and looking on with a face of incredulous delight, as though he could not credit the testimony of his own senses, and had a misgiving that no man could be so clever but in a dream.

These are my friends ; I have now introduced myself and them.

THE CLOCK-CASE.

A CONFESSION FOUND IN A PRISON IN THE TIME OF CHARLES
THE SECOND.

I HELD a lieutenant's commission in His Majesty's army, and served abroad in the campaigns of 1677 and 1678. The treaty of Nimeguen being concluded, I returned home, and retiring from the service withdrew to a small estate lying a few miles east of London, which I had recently acquired in right of my wife.

This is the last night I have to live, and I will set down the naked truth without disguise. I was never a brave man, and had always been from my childhood of a secret, sullen, distrustful nature. I speak of myself as if I had passed from the world, for while I write this my grave is digging and my name is written in the black book of death.

Soon after my return to England, my only brother was seized with mortal illness. This circumstance gave me slight or no pain, for since we had been men we had associated but very little together. He was open-hearted and generous, handsomer than I, more accomplished, and generally beloved. Those who sought my acquaintance abroad or at home, because they were friends of his, seldom attached themselves to me long, and would usually say in our first conversation that they were surprised to find two brothers so unlike in their manners and appearance. It was my habit to lead them on to this avowal, for I knew what comparisons they must draw between us, and having a rankling envy in my heart, I sought to justify it to myself.

We had married two sisters. This additional tie between us, as it may appear to some, only estranged us the more. His wife knew me well. I never struggled with any secret jealousy or gall when she was present

but that woman knew it as well as I did. I never raised my eyes at such times but I found hers fixed upon me ; I never bent them on the ground or looked another way, but I felt that she overlooked me always. It was an inexpressible relief to me when we quarrelled, and a greater relief still when I heard abroad that she was dead. It seems to me now as if some strange and terrible foreshadowing of what has happened since must have hung over us then. I was afraid of her ; she haunted me ; her fixed and steady look comes back upon me now, like the memory of a dark dream, and makes my blood run cold.

She died shortly after giving birth to a child, — a boy. When my brother knew that all hope of his own recovery was passed, he called my wife to his bedside and confided this orphan, a child of four years old, to her protection. He bequeathed to him all the property he had, and willed that in case of his child's death it should pass to my wife, as the only acknowledgment he could make her for her care and love. He exchanged a few brotherly words with me, deploring our long separation, and being exhausted fell into a slumber from which he never awoke.

We had no children, and as there had been a strong affection between the sisters, and my wife had almost supplied the place of a mother to this boy, she loved him as if he had been her own. The child was ardently attached to her ; but he was his mother's image in face and spirit, and always mistrusted me.

I can scarcely fix the date when the feeling first came upon me, but I soon began to be uneasy when this child was by. I never roused myself from some moody train of thought but I marked him looking at me ; not with mere childish wonder, but with something of the purpose and meaning that I had so often noted in his mother. It was no effort of my fancy, founded on close resemblance of feature and expression. I never could look the boy down. He feared me, but seemed by some instinct to despise me while he did so ; and even when he drew back beneath my gaze — as he would when we were alone, to get nearer to the door — he would keep his bright eyes upon me still.

Perhaps I hide the truth from myself, but I do not

think that when this began, I meditated to do him any wrong. I may have thought how serviceable his inheritance would be to us, and may have wished him dead, but I believe I had no thought of compassing his death. Neither did the idea come upon me at once, but by very slow degrees, presenting itself at first in dim shapes at a very great distance, as men may think of an earthquake or the last day, — then drawing nearer and nearer and losing something of its horror and improbability, — then coming to be part and parcel, nay nearly the whole sum and substance of my daily thoughts, and resolving itself into a question of means and safety; not of doing or abstaining from the deed.

While this was going on within me, I never could bear that the child should see me looking at him, and yet I was under a fascination which made it a kind of business with me to contemplate his slight and fragile figure and think how easily it might be done. Sometimes I would steal up stairs and watch him as he slept, but usually I hovered in the garden near the window of the room in which he learnt his little tasks; and there, as he sat upon a low seat beside my wife, I would peer at him for hours together from behind a tree; starting, like the guilty wretch I was, at every rustling of a leaf, and still gliding back to look and start again.

Hard by our cottage, but quite out of sight, and (if there were any wind astir) of hearing too, was a deep sheet of water. I spent days in shaping with my pocket-knife a rough model of a boat, which I finished at last and dropped in the child's way. Then I withdrew to a secret place which he must pass if he stole away alone to swim this bauble, and lurked there for his coming. He came neither that day nor the next, though I waited from noon till nightfall. I was sure that I had him in my net, for I had heard him prattling of the toy, and knew that in his infant pleasure he kept it by his side in bed. I felt no weariness or fatigue, but waited patiently, and on the third day he passed me, running joyously along, with his silken hair streaming in the wind, and he singing — God have mercy upon me! — singing a merry ballad, — who could hardly lisp the words.

I stole down after him, creeping under certain shrubs

which grow in that place, and none but devils know with what terror I, a strong, full-grown man, tracked the footsteps of that baby as he approached the water's brink. I was close upon him, had sunk upon my knee and raised my hand to thrust him in, when he saw my shadow in the stream and turned him round.

His mother's ghost was looking from his eyes. The sun burst forth from behind a cloud; it shone in the bright sky, the glistening earth, the clear water, the sparkling drops of rain upon the leaves. There were eyes in everything. The whole great universe of light was there to see the murder done. I know not what he said; he came of bold and manly blood, and child as he was, he did not crouch or fawn upon me. I heard him cry that he would try to love me, — not that he did, — and then I saw him running back towards the house. The next I saw was my own sword naked in my hand, and he lying at my feet stark dead, — dabbled here and there with blood, but otherwise no different from what I had seen him in his sleep, — in the same attitude too, with his cheek resting upon his little hand.

I took him in my arms and laid him — very gently now that he was dead — in a thicket. My wife was from home that day and would not return until the next. Our bedroom window, the only sleeping-room on that side of the house, was but a few feet from the ground, and I resolved to descend from it at night and bury him in the garden. I had no thought that I had failed in my design, no thought that the water would be dragged and nothing found, that the money must now lie waste since I must encourage the idea that the child was lost or stolen. All my thoughts were bound up and knotted together in the one absorbing necessity of hiding what I had done.

How I felt when they came to tell me that the child was missing, when I ordered scouts in all directions, when I gasped and trembled at every one's approach, no tongue can tell or mind of man conceive. I buried him that night. When I parted the boughs and looked into the dark thicket, there was a glow-worm shining like the visible spirit of God upon the murdered child. I glanced down into his grave when I had placed him there, and

still it gleamed upon his breast ; an eye of fire looking up to Heaven in supplication to the stars that watched me at my work.

I had to meet my wife, and break the news, and give her hope that the child would soon be found. All this I did, — with some appearance, I suppose, of being sincere, for I was the object of no suspicion. This done, I sat at the bedroom window all day long, and watched the spot where the dreadful secret lay.

It was in a piece of ground which had been dug up to be newly turfed, and which I had chosen on that account, as the traces of my spade were less likely to attract attention. The men who laid down the grass must have thought me mad. I called to them continually to expedite their work, ran out and worked beside them, trod down the earth with my feet, and hurried them with frantic eagerness. They had finished their task before night, and then I thought myself comparatively safe.

I slept, — not as men do who awake refreshed and cheerful, but I did sleep, passing from vague and shadowy dreams of being hunted down, to visions of the plot of grass, through which now a hand and now a foot and now the head itself was starting out. At this point I always woke and stole to the window, to make sure that it was not really so. That done I crept to bed again, and thus I spent the night in fits and starts, getting up and lying down full twenty times, and dreaming the same dream over and over again, — which was far worse than lying awake, for every dream had a whole night's suffering of its own. Once I thought the child was alive and that I had never tried to kill him. To wake from that dream was the most dreadful agony of all.

The next day I sat at the window again, never once taking my eyes from the place, which, although it was covered by the grass, was as plain to me — its shape, its size, its depth, its jagged sides, and all — as if it had been open to the light of day. When a servant walked across it, I felt as if he must sink in ; when he had passed, I looked to see that his feet had not worn the edges. If a bird lighted there, I was in terror lest by

some tremendous interposition it should be instrumental in the discovery ; if a breath of air sighed across it, to me it whispered murder. There was not a sight or a sound — how ordinary, mean, or unimportant soever — but was fraught with fear. And in this state of ceaseless watching I spent three days.

On the fourth, there came to the gate one who had served with me abroad, accompanied by a brother officer of his whom I had never seen. I felt that I could not bear to be out of sight of the place. It was a summer evening, and I bade my people take a table and a flask of wine into the garden. Then I sat down *with my chair upon the grave*, and being assured that nobody could disturb it now, without my knowledge, tried to drink and talk.

They hoped that my wife was well, — that she was not obliged to keep her chamber, — that they had not frightened her away. What could I do but tell them with a faltering tongue about the child ? The officer whom I did not know was a down-looking man, and kept his eyes upon the ground while I was speaking. Even that terrified me ! I could not divest myself of the idea that he saw something there which caused him to suspect the truth. I asked him hurriedly if he supposed that — and stopped. “ That the child has been murdered ? ” said he, looking mildly at me. “ O no ! what could a man gain by murdering a poor child ? ” I could have told him what a man gained by such a deed, no one better, but I held my peace and shivered as with an ague.

Mistaking my emotion, they were endeavoring to cheer me with the hope that the boy would certainly be found, — great cheer that was for me, — when we heard a low deep howl, and presently there sprung over the wall two great dogs, who, bounding into the garden, repeated the baying sound we had heard before.

“ Bloodhounds ! ” cried my visitors.

What need to tell me that ! I had never seen one of that kind in all my life, but I knew what they were and for what purpose they had come. I grasped the elbows of my chair, and neither spoke nor moved.

“ They are of the genuine breed,” said the man whom

I had known abroad, "and being out for exercise have no doubt escaped from their keeper."

Both he and his friend turned to look at the dogs, who with their noses to the ground moved restlessly about, running to and fro, and up and down, and across, and round in circles, careering about like wild things, and all this time taking no notice of us, but ever and again repeating the yell we had heard already, then dropping their noses to the ground again and tracking earnestly here and there. They now began to snuff the earth more eagerly than they had done yet, and although they were still very restless, no longer beat about in such wide circuits, but kept near to one spot, and constantly diminished the distance between themselves and me.

At last they came up close to the great chair on which I sat, and raising their frightful howl once more, tried to tear away the wooden rails that kept them from the ground beneath. I saw how I looked, in the faces of the two who were with me.

"They scent some prey," said they, both together.

"They scent no prey!" cried I.

"In Heaven's name, move," said the one I knew, very earnestly, "or you will be torn to pieces."

"Let them tear me from limb to limb, I'll never leave this place!" cried I. "Are dogs to hurry men to shameful deaths? Hew them down, cut them in pieces."

"There is some foul mystery here!" said the officer whom I did not know, drawing his sword. "In King Charles's name, assist me to secure this man."

They both set upon me and forced me away, though I fought and bit and caught at them like a madman. After a struggle they got me quietly between them, and then, my God! I saw the angry dogs tearing at the earth and throwing it up into the air like water.

What more have I to tell? That I fell upon my knees and with chattering teeth confessed the truth and prayed to be forgiven. That I have since denied and now confess to it again. That I have been tried for the crime, found guilty, and sentenced. That I have not the courage to anticipate my doom or to bear up manfully against it. That I have no compassion, no conso-

lation, no hope, no friend. That my wife has happily lost for the time those faculties which would enable her to know my misery or hers. That I am alone in this stone dungeon with my evil spirit, and that I die to-morrow !*

* * * * *

* Old Curiosity Shop begins here.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MASTER HUMPHREY has been favored with the following letter, written on strongly scented paper, and sealed in light blue wax with the representation of two very plump doves, interchanging beaks. It does not commence with any of the usual forms of address, but begins as is here set forth.

BATH, *Wednesday Night.*

Heavens ! into what an indiscretion do I suffer myself to be betrayed ! To address these faltering lines to a total stranger, and that stranger one of a conflicting sex ! — and yet I am precipitated into the abyss, and have no power of self-snatchation (forgive me if I coin that phrase) from the yawning gulf before me.

Yes, I am writing to a man, but let me not think of that, for madness is in the thought. You will understand my feelings ? O yes ! I am sure you will ! and you will respect them too, and not despise them, — will you ?

Let me be calm. That portrait, — smiling as once he smiled on me ; that cane, — dangling as I have seen it dangle from his hand I know not how oft ; those legs that have glided through my nightly dreams and never stopped to speak ; the perfectly gentlemanly, though false original, — can I be mistaken ? O no, no.

Let me be calmer yet ; I would be calm as coffins. You have published a letter from one whose likeness is engraved, but whose name (and wherefore ?) is suppressed. Shall I breathe that name ! Is it — but why ask when my heart tells me too truly that it is !

I would not upbraid him with his treachery, I would not remind him of those times when he plighted the most eloquent of vows, and procured from me a small pecuniary accommodation ; and yet I would see him — see him did I say — *him* — alas ! such is woman's nature.

For as the poet beautifully says — but you will already have anticipated the sentiment. Is it not sweet? O yes!

It was in this city (hallowed by the recollection) that I met him first; and assuredly if mortal happiness be recorded anywhere, then those rubbers with their three-and-sixpenny points are scored on tablets of celestial brass. He always held an honor, — generally two. On that eventful night, we stood at eight. He raised his eyes (luminous in their seductive sweetness) to my agitated face. “*Can you?*” said he, with peculiar meaning. I felt the gentle pressure of his foot on mine; our corns throbbed in unison. “*Can you?*” he said again, and every lineament of his expressive countenance added the words “*resist me?*” I murmured “No,” and fainted.

They said when I recovered, it was the weather. I said it was the nutmeg in the negus. How little did they suspect the truth! How little did they guess the deep mysterious meaning of that inquiry! He called next morning on his knees; I do not mean to say that he actually came in that position to the house door, but that he went down upon those joints directly the servant had retired. He brought some verses in his hat which he said were original, but which I have since found were Milton's. Likewise a little bottle labelled laudanum: also a pistol and a swordstick. He drew the latter, uncorked the former, and clicked the trigger of the pocket fire-arm. He had come, he said, to conquer or to die. He did not die. He wrested from me an avowal of my love, and let off the pistol out of a back window previous to partaking of a slight repast.

Faithless, inconstant man! How many ages seem to have elapsed since his unaccountable and perfidious disappearance! Could I still forgive him both that and the borrowed lucre that he promised to pay next week! Could I spurn him from my feet if he approached in penitence, and with a matrimonial object! Would the blandishing enchanter still weave his shells around me, or should I burst them all and turn away in coldness! I dare not trust my weakness with the thought.

My brain is in a whirl again. You know his address, his occupations, his mode of life, — are acquainted, per-

haps, with his inmost thoughts. You are a humane and philanthropic character; reveal all you know — all; but especially the street and number of his lodgings. The post is departing, the bellman rings, — pray Heaven it be not the knell of love and hope to

BELINDA.

P. S. Pardon the wanderings of a bad pen and a distracted mind. Address to the Post-office. The bellman, rendered impatient by delay, is ringing dreadfully in the passage.

P. P. S. I open this to say that the bellman is gone, and that you must not expect it till the next post; so don't be surprised when you don't get it.

Master Humphrey does not feel himself at liberty to furnish his fair correspondent with the address of the gentleman in question, but he publishes her letter as a public appeal to his faith and gallantry.

MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK.

III.

MASTER HUMPHREY'S VISITOR.

WHEN I am in a thoughtful mood, I often succeed in diverting the current of some mournful reflections, by conjuring up a number of fanciful associations with the objects that surround me, and dwelling upon the scenes and characters they suggest.

I have been led by this habit to assign to every room in my house and every old staring portrait on its walls a separate interest of its own. Thus, I am persuaded that a stately dame, terrible to behold in her rigid modesty, who hangs above the chimney-piece of my bedroom, is the former lady of the mansion. In the court-yard below is a stone face of surpassing ugliness, which I have somehow — in a kind of jealousy, I am afraid — associated with her husband. Above my study is a little room with ivy peeping through the lattice, from which I bring their daughter, a lovely girl of eighteen or nineteen years of age, and dutiful in all respects save one, that one being her devoted attachment to a young gentleman on the stairs, whose grandmother (degraded to a disused laundry in the garden) piques herself upon an old family quarrel, and is the implacable enemy of their love. With such materials as these, I work out many a little drama, whose chief merit is, that I can bring it to a happy end at will; I have so many of them on hand, that if on my return home one of these evenings I were to find some bluff old wight of two centuries ago comfortably seated in my easy-chair, and a lovelorn damsel vainly appealing to his heart, and leaning her white arm upon my clock itself, I verily believe I should only express my surprise

that they had kept me waiting so long and never honored me with a call before.

I was in such a mood as this, sitting in my garden yesterday morning under the shade of a favorite tree, revelling in all the bloom and brightness about me, and feeling every sense of hope and enjoyment quickened by this most beautiful season of Spring, when my meditations were interrupted by the unexpected appearance of my barber at the end of the walk, who I immediately saw was coming towards me with a hasty step that betokened something remarkable.

My barber is at all times a very brisk, bustling, active little man, — for he is, as it were, chubby all over, without being stout or unwieldy, — but yesterday his alacrity was so very uncommon that it quite took me by surprise. For could I fail to observe when he came up to me, that his gray eyes were twinkling in a most extraordinary manner, that his little red nose was in an unusual glow, that every line in his round, bright face was twisted and curved into an expression of pleased surprise, and that his whole countenance was radiant with glee? I was still more surprised to see my housekeeper, who usually preserves a very staid air, and stands somewhat upon her dignity, peeping round the hedge at the bottom of the walk, and exchanging nods and smiles with the barber, who twice or thrice looked over his shoulder for that purpose. I could conceive no announcement to which these appearances could be the prelude, unless it were that they had married each other that morning.

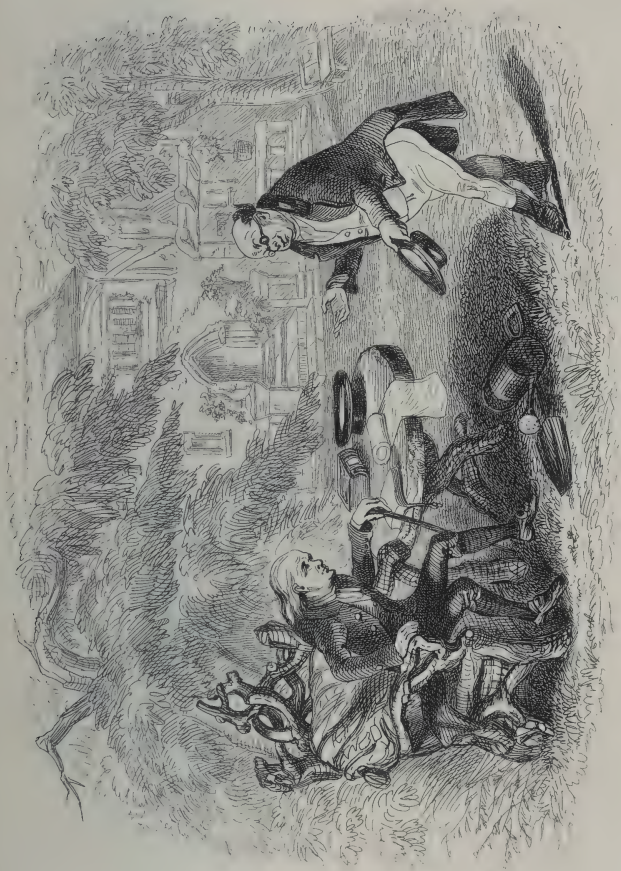
I was, consequently, a little disappointed when it only came out that there was a gentleman in the house who wished to speak with me.

“And who is it?” said I

The barber, with his face screwed up still tighter than before, replied that the gentleman would not send his name, but wished to see me. I pondered for a moment, wondering who this visitor might be, and I remarked that he embraced the opportunity of exchanging another nod with the housekeeper, who still lingered in the distance.

“Well!” said I, “bid the gentleman come here.”

This seemed to be the consummation of the barber's hopes, for he turned sharp round, and actually ran away.



Now, my sight is not very good at a distance, and therefore when the gentleman first appeared in the walk, I was not quite clear whether he was a stranger to me or otherwise. He was an elderly gentleman, but came tripping along in the pleasantest manner conceivable, avoiding the garden-roller and the borders of the beds with inimitable dexterity, picking his way among the flower-pots, and smiling with unspeakable good-humor. Before he was half-way up the walk he began to salute me; then I thought I knew him; but when he came towards me with his hat in his hand, the sun shining on his bald head, his bland face, his bright spectacles, his fawn-colored tights, and his black gaiters, — then my heart warmed towards him and I felt quite certain that it was Mr. Pickwick.

“My dear sir,” said that gentleman as I rose to receive him, “pray be seated. Pray sit down. Now, do not stand on my account. I must insist upon it, really.” With these words Mr. Pickwick gently pressed me down into my seat, and taking my hand in his, shook it again and again with a warmth of manner perfectly irresistible. I endeavored to express in my welcome something of that heartiness and pleasure which the sight of him awakened, and made him sit down beside me. All this time he kept alternately releasing my hand and grasping it again, and surveying me through his spectacles with such a beaming countenance as I never beheld.

“You knew me directly!” said Mr. Pickwick. “What a pleasure it is to think that you knew me directly!”

I remarked that I had read his adventures very often, and his features were quite familiar to me from the published portraits. As I thought it a good opportunity of adverting to the circumstance, I condoled with him upon the various libels on his character which had found their way into print. Mr. Pickwick shook his head, and for a moment looked very indignant, but smiling again directly, added that no doubt I was acquainted with Cervantes's introduction to the second part of *Don Quixote*, and that it fully expressed his sentiments on the subject.

“But now,” said Mr. Pickwick, “don't you wonder how I found you out?”

"I shall never wonder, and, with your good leave, never know," said I, smiling in my turn. "It is enough for me that you give me this gratification. I have not the least desire that you should tell me by what means I have obtained it."

"You are very kind," returned Mr. Pickwick, shaking me by the hand again; "you are so exactly what I expected! But for what particular purpose do you think I have sought you, my dear sir? Now what *do* you think I have come for?"

Mr. Pickwick put this question as though he were persuaded that it was morally impossible that I could by any means divine the deep purpose of his visit, and that it must be hidden from all human ken. Therefore, although I was rejoiced to think that I had anticipated his drift, I feigned to be quite ignorant of it, and after a brief consideration shook my head despairingly.

"What should you say," said Mr. Pickwick, laying the forefinger of his left hand upon my coat-sleeve, and looking at me with his head thrown back, and a little on one side, — "what should you say if I confessed that after reading your account of yourself and your little society, I had come here, a humble candidate for one of those empty chairs?"

"I should say," I returned, "that I know of only one circumstance which could still further endear that little society to me, and that would be the associating with it my old friend, — for you must let me call you so, — my old friend, Mr. Pickwick."

As I made him this answer every feature of Mr. Pickwick's face fused itself into one all-pervading expression of delight. After shaking me heartily by both hands at once, he patted me gently on the back, and then — I well understood why — colored up to the eyes, and hoped with great earnestness of manner that he had not hurt me.

If he had, I would have been content that he should have repeated the offence a hundred times rather than suppose so; but as he had not, I had no difficulty in changing the subject by making an inquiry which had been upon my lips twenty times already.

"You have not told me," said I, "anything about Sam Weller."

"Oh! Sam," replied Mr Pickwick, "is the same as ever. The same true, faithful fellow that he ever was. What should I tell you about Sam, my dear sir, except that he is more indispensable to my happiness and comfort every day of my life?"

"And Mr. Weller senior?" said I.

"Old Mr. Weller," returned Mr. Pickwick, "is in no respect more altered than Sam, unless it be that he is a little more opinionated than he was formerly, and perhaps at times more talkative. He spends a good deal of his time now in our neighborhood, and has so constituted himself a part of my body-guard, that when I ask permission for Sam to have a seat in your kitchen on clock nights (supposing your three friends think me worthy to fill one of the chairs), I am afraid I must often include Mr. Weller too."

I very readily pledged myself to give both Sam and his father a free admission to my house at all hours and seasons, and this point settled, we fell into a lengthy conversation which was carried on with as little reserve on both sides as if we had been intimate friends from our youth, and which conveyed to me the comfortable assurance that Mr. Pickwick's buoyancy of spirit, and indeed all his old cheerful characteristics, were wholly unimpaired. As he had spoken of the consent of my friends as being yet in abeyance, I repeatedly assured him that his proposal was certain to receive their most joyful sanction, and several times entreated that he would give me leave to introduce him to Jack Redburn and Mr. Miles (who were near at hand) without further ceremony.

To this proposal, however, Mr. Pickwick's delicacy would by no means allow him to accede, for he urged that his eligibility must be formally discussed, and that, until this had been done, he could not think of obtruding himself further. The utmost I could obtain from him was a promise that he would attend upon our next night of meeting, that I might have the pleasure of presenting him immediately on his election.

Mr Pickwick, having with many blushes placed in my hands a small roll of paper, which he termed his "qualification," put a great many questions to me touching my friends, and particularly Jack Redburn, whom he repeat-

edly termed "a fine fellow," and in whose favor I could see he was strongly predisposed. When I had satisfied him on these points, I took him up into my room that he might make acquaintance with the old chamber which is our place of meeting.

"And this," said Mr. Pickwick stopping short, "is the clock! Dear me! And this is really the old clock!"

I thought he would never have come away from it. After advancing towards it softly, and laying his hand upon it with as much respect and as many smiling looks as if it were alive, he set himself to consider it in every possible direction, now mounting on a chair to look at the top, now going down upon his knees to examine the bottom, now surveying the sides with his spectacles almost touching the case, and now trying to peep between it and the wall to get a slight view of the back. Then he would retire a pace or two and look up at the dial to see it go, and then draw near again and stand with his head on one side to hear it tick: never failing to glance towards me at intervals of a few seconds each, and nod his head with such complacent gratification as I am quite unable to describe. His admiration was not confined to the clock either, but extended itself to every article in the room; and really, when he had gone through them every one, and at last sat himself down in all the six chairs, one after another, to try how they felt, I never saw such a picture of good-humor and happiness as he presented, from the top of his shining head down to the very last button of his gaiters.

I should have been well pleased, and should have had the utmost enjoyment of his company, if he had remained with me all day, but my favorite, striking the hour, reminded him that he must take his leave. I could not forbear telling him once more how glad he had made me, and we shook hands all the way down stairs.

We had no sooner arrived in the Hall, than my housekeeper, gliding out of her little room (she had changed her gown and cap, I observed), greeted Mr. Pickwick with her best smile and courtesy; and the barber, feigning to be accidentally passing on his way out, made him a vast number of bows. When the housekeeper courtesied, Mr. Pickwick bowed with the utmost politeness,

and when he bowed, the housekeeper courtesied again ; between the housekeeper and the barber, I should say that Mr. Pickwick faced about and bowed with undiminished affability, fifty times at least.

I saw him to the door ; an omnibus was at the moment passing the corner of the lane, which Mr. Pickwick hailed and ran after with extraordinary nimbleness. When he had got about half-way he turned his head, and seeing that I was still looking after him and that I waved my hand, stopped, evidently irresolute whether to come back and shake hands again, or to go on. The man behind the omnibus shouted, and Mr. Pickwick ran a little way towards him : then he looked round at me, and ran a little way back again. Then there was another shout, and he turned round once more and ran the other way. After several of these vibrations, the man settled the question by taking Mr. Pickwick by the arm and putting him into the carriage ; but his last action was to let down the window and wave his hat to me as it drove off.

I lost no time in opening the parcel he had left with me. The following were its contents :—

MR. PICKWICK'S TALE.

A good many years have passed away since old John Podgers lived in the town of Windsor, where he was born, and where, in course of time, he came to be comfortably and snugly buried. You may be sure that in the time of King James the First, Windsor was a very quaint, queer old town, and you may take it upon my authority that John Podgers was a very quaint, queer old fellow ; consequently he and Windsor fitted each other to a nicety, and seldom parted company even for half a day.

John Podgers was broad, sturdy, Dutch-built, short, and a very hard eater, as men of his figure often are. Being a hard sleeper likewise, he divided his time pretty equally between these two recreations, always falling asleep when he had done eating, and always taking another turn at the trencher when he had done sleeping, by which means he grew more corpulent and more drowsy every day of his life. Indeed it used to be currently

reported that when he sauntered up and down the sunny side of the street before dinner (as he never failed to do in fair weather), he enjoyed his soundest nap; but many people held this to be a fiction, as he had several times been seen to look after fat oxen on market days, and had even been heard, by persons of good credit and reputation, to chuckle at the sight, and say to himself with great glee, "Live beef, live beef!" It was upon this evidence that the wisest people in Windsor (beginning with the local authorities of course) held that John Podgers was a man of strong, sound sense, — not what is called smart, perhaps, and it might be of a rather lazy and apoplectic turn, but still a man of solid parts, and one who meant much more than he cared to show. This impression was confirmed by a very dignified way he had of shaking his head and imparting, at the same time, a pendulous motion to his double chin; in short he passed for one of those people who, being plunged into the Thames, would make no vain efforts to set it afire, but would straightway flop down to the bottom with a deal of gravity, and be highly respected in consequence by all good men.

Being well to do in the world, and a peaceful widower, — having a great appetite, which, as he could afford to gratify it, was a luxury and no inconvenience, and a power of going to sleep, which, as he had no occasion to keep awake, was a most enviable faculty, — you will readily suppose that John Podgers was a happy man. But appearances are often deceptive when they least seem so, and the truth is that, notwithstanding his extreme sleekness, he was rendered uneasy in his mind and exceedingly uncomfortable by a constant apprehension that beset him night and day.

You know very well that in those times there flourished divers evil old women who, under the name of Witches, spread great disorder through the land, and inflicted various dismal tortures upon Christian men; sticking pins and needles into them when they least expected it, and causing them to walk in the air with their feet upwards, to the great terror of their wives and families, who were naturally very much disconcerted when the master of the house unexpectedly came home, knocking at the door with

his heels and combing his hair on the scraper. These were their commonest pranks, but they every day played a hundred others, of which none were less objectionable, and many were much more so, being improper besides; the result was that vengeance was denounced against all old women, with whom even the king himself had no sympathy (as he certainly ought to have had), for with his own most Gracious hand he penned a most Gracious consignment of them to everlasting wrath, and devised most Gracious means for their confusion and slaughter, in virtue whereof scarcely a day passed but one witch at the least was most graciously hanged, drowned, or roasted in some part of his dominions. Still the press teemed with strange and terrible news from the North or the South, or the East or the West, relative to witches and their unhappy victims in some corner of the country, and the Public's hair stood on end to that degree that it lifted its hat off its head, and made its face pale with terror.

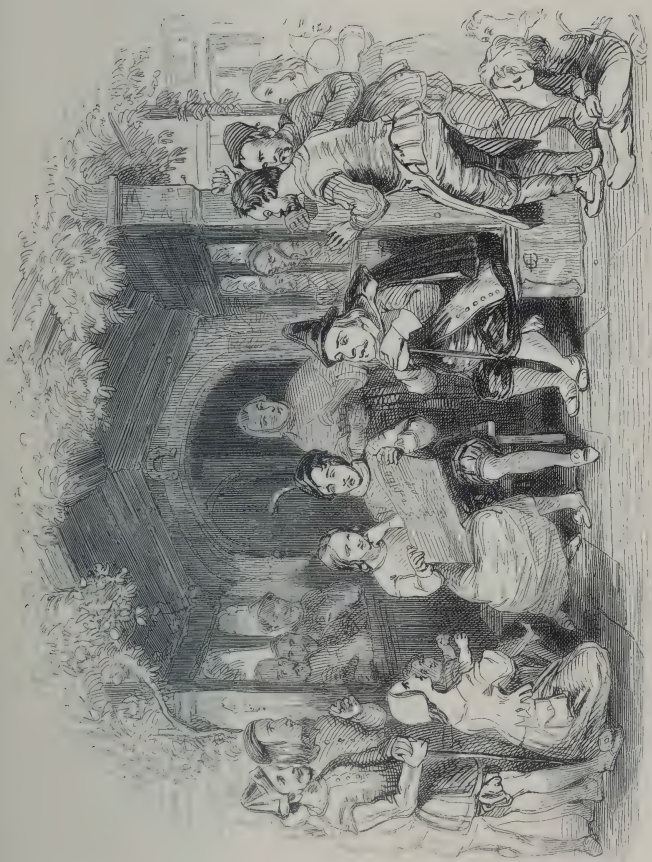
You may believe that the little town of Windsor did not escape the general contagion. The inhabitants boiled a witch on the King's birthday and sent a bottle of the broth to court, with a dutiful address expressive of their loyalty. The King, being rather frightened by the present, piously bestowed it upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, and returned an answer to the address, wherein he gave them golden rules for discovering witches, and laid great stress upon certain protecting charms, and especially horseshoes. Immediately the towns-people went to work nailing up horseshoes over every door, and so many anxious parents apprenticed their children to farriers to keep them out of harm's way, that it became quite a genteel trade and flourished exceedingly.

In the midst of all this bustle John Podgers ate and slept as usual, but shook his head a great deal oftener than was his custom, and was observed to look at the oxen less, and at the old women more. He had a little shelf put up in his sitting-room, whereon was displayed, in a row which grew longer every week, all the witchcraft literature of the time; he grew learned in charms and exorcisms, hinted at certain questionable females on broomsticks whom he had seen from his chamber window, riding in the air at night, and was in constant terror of

being bewitched. At length, from perpetually dwelling upon this one idea, which, being alone in his head, had it all its own way, the fear of witches became the single passion of his life. He, who up to that time had never known what it was to dream, began to have visions of witches whenever he fell asleep; waking, they were incessantly present to his imagination likewise; and, sleeping or waking, he had not a moment's peace. He began to set witch-traps in the highway, and was often seen lying in wait round the corner for hours together, to watch their effect. These engines were of simple construction, usually consisting of two straws disposed in the form of a cross, or a piece of a Bible cover with a pinch of salt upon it; but they were infallible, and if an old woman chanced to stumble over them (as not unfrequently happened, the chosen spot being a broken and stony place), John started from a doze, pounced out upon her, and hung round her neck till assistance arrived, when she was immediately carried away and drowned. By dint of constantly inveigling old ladies and disposing of them in this summary manner, he acquired the reputation of a great public character; and as he received no harm in these pursuits beyond a scratched face or so, he came, in course of time, to be considered witch-proof.

There was but one person who entertained the least doubt of John Podgers's gifts, and that person was his own nephew, a wild, roving young fellow of twenty who had been brought up in his uncle's house and lived there still, — that is to say, when he was at home, which was not as often as it might have been. As he was an apt scholar, it was he who read aloud every fresh piece of strange and terrible intelligence that John Podgers bought; and this he always did of an evening in the little porch in front of the house, round which the neighbors would flock in crowds to hear the direful news, — for people like to be frightened, and when they can be frightened for nothing and at another man's expense, they like it all the better.

One fine midsummer evening, a group of persons were gathered in this place, listening intently to Will Marks (that was the nephew's name), as with his cap very much on one side, his arm coiled slyly round the waist of a



pretty girl who sat beside him, and his face screwed into a comical expression intended to represent extreme gravity, he read — with Heaven knows how many embellishments of his own — a dismal account of a gentleman down in Northamptonshire under the influence of witchcraft and taken forcible possession of by the Devil, who was playing his very self with him. John Podgers, in a high sugar-loaf hat and short cloak, filled the opposite seat, and surveyed the auditory with a look of mingled pride and horror very edifying to see ; while the hearers, with their heads thrust forward and their mouths open, listened and trembled, and hoped there was a great deal more to come. Sometimes Will stopped for an instant to look round upon his eager audience, and then, with a more comical expression of face than before and a settling of himself comfortably, which included a squeeze of the young lady before mentioned, he launched into some new wonder surpassing all the others.

The setting sun shed his last golden rays upon this little party who, absorbed in their present occupation, took no heed of the approach of night or the glory in which the day went down, when the sound of a horse, approaching at a good round trot, invading the silence of the hour, caused the reader to make a sudden stop and the listeners to raise their heads in wonder. Nor was their wonder diminished when a horseman dashed up to the porch, and abruptly checking his steed, inquired where one John Podgers dwelt.

“ Here ! ” cried a dozen voices, while a dozen hands pointed out sturdy John, still basking in the terrors of the pamphlet.

The rider giving his bridle to one of those who surrounded him, dismounted, and approached John, hat in hand, but with great haste.

“ Whence come ye ? ” said John.

“ From Kingston, master.”

“ And wherefore ? ”

“ On most pressing business.”

“ Of what nature ? ”

“ Witchcraft.”

Witchcraft ! Everybody looked aghast at the breathless messenger, and the breathless messenger looked

equally aghast at everybody, — except Will Marks, who, finding himself unobserved, not only squeezed the young lady again, but kissed her twice. Surely he must have been bewitched himself, or he never could have done it, — and the young lady too, or she never would have let him.

“ Witchcraft ? ” cried Will, drowning the sound of his last kiss, which was rather a loud one.

The messenger turned towards him, and with a frown, repeated the word more solemnly than before ; then told his errand, which was, in brief, that the people of Kingston had been greatly terrified for some nights past by hideous revels, held by witches beneath the gibbet within a mile of the town, and related and deposed to by chance wayfarers who had passed within ear-shot of the spot ; that the sound of their voices in their wild orgies had been plainly heard by many persons ; that three old women labored under strong suspicion, and that precedents had been consulted and solemn council had, and it was found that to identify the hags some single person must watch upon the spot alone ; that no single person had the courage to perform the task, and that he had been despatched express to solicit John Podgers to undertake it that very night, as being a man of great renown, who bore a charmed life, and was proof against unholy spells.

John received this communication with much composure, and said in a few words, that it would have afforded him inexpressible pleasure to do the Kingston people so slight a service, if it were not for his unfortunate propensity to fall asleep, which no man regretted more than himself upon the present occasion, but which quite settled the question. Nevertheless, he said, there *was* a gentleman present (and here he looked very hard at a tall farrier) who, having been engaged all his life in the manufacture of horseshoes, must be quite invulnerable to the power of witches, and who, he had no doubt, from his own reputation for bravery and good-nature, would readily accept the commission. The farrier politely thanked him for his good opinion, which it would always be his study to deserve, but added that, with regard to the present little matter, he could n’t think of it on

any account, as his departing on such an errand would certainly occasion the instant death of his wife, to whom, as they all knew, he was tenderly attached. Now so far from this circumstance being notorious, everybody had suspected the reverse, as the farrier was in the habit of beating his lady rather more than tender husbands usually do; all the married men present, however, applauded his resolution with great vehemence, and one and all declared that they would stop at home and die if needful (which happily it was not) in defence of their lawful partners.

This burst of enthusiasm over, they began to look, as by one consent, toward Will Marks, who, with his cap more on one side than ever, sat watching the proceedings with extraordinary unconcern. He had never been heard openly to express his disbelief in witches, but had often cut such jokes at their expense as left it to be inferred; publicly stating on several occasions that he considered a broomstick an inconvenient charger, and one especially unsuited to the dignity of the female character, and indulging in other free remarks of the same tendency, to the great amusement of his wild companions.

As they looked at Will, they began to whisper and murmur among themselves, and at length one man cried, "Why don't you ask Will Marks?"

As this was what everybody had been thinking of, they all took up the word, and cried in concert, "Ah! why don't you ask Will?"

"*He* don't care," said the farrier.

"Not he," added another voice in the crowd.

"He don't believe in it, you know," sneered a little man with a yellow face and a taunting nose and chin, which he thrust out from under the arm of a long man before him.

"Besides," said a red-faced gentleman with a gruff voice, "he's a single man."

"That's the point!" said the farrier; and all the married men murmured, ah! that was it, and they only wished they were single themselves; they would show him what spirit was, very soon.

The messenger looked towards Will Marks beseechingly.

"It will be a wet night, friend, and my gray nag is tired after yesterday's work —"

Here there was a general titter.

"But," resumed Will, looking about him with a smile, "if nobody else puts in a better claim to go, for the credit of the town I am your man, and I would be if I had to go afoot. In five minutes I shall be in the saddle, unless I am depriving any worthy gentleman here of the honor of the adventure, which I would n't do for the world."

But here arose a double difficulty, for not only did John Podgers combat the resolution with all the words he had, which were not many, but the young lady combated it too with all the tears she had, which were very many indeed. Will, however, being inflexible, parried his uncle's objections with a joke, and coaxed the young lady into a smile in three short whispers. As it was plain that he would go and set his mind upon it, John Podgers offered him a few first-rate charms out of his own pocket which he dutifully declined to accept, and the young lady gave him a kiss which he also returned.

"You see what a rare thing it is to be married," said Will, "and how careful and considerate all these husbands are. There's not a man among them but his heart is leaping to forestall me in this adventure, and yet a strong sense of duty keeps him back. The husbands in this one little town are a pattern to the world, and so must the wives be too, for that matter, or they could never boast half the influence they have!"

Waiting for no reply to this sarcasm, he snapped his fingers and withdrew into the house, and thence into the stable, while some busied themselves in refreshing the messenger, and others in baiting his steed. In less than the specified time he returned by another way, with a good cloak hanging over his arm, a good sword girded by his side, and leading his good horse caparisoned for the journey.

"Now," said Will, leaping into the saddle at a bound, "up and away. Upon your mettle, friend, and push on. Good night!"

He kissed his hand to the girl, nodded to his drowsy uncle, waved his cap to the rest, — and off they flew pell-

mell, as if all the witches in England were in their horses' legs. They were out of sight in a minute.

The men who were left behind shook their heads doubtfully, stroked their chins, and shook their heads again. The farrier said that certainly Will Marks was a good horseman, nobody should ever say he denied that; but he was rash, very rash, and there was no telling what the end of it might be; what did he go for, that was what he wanted to know? He wished the young fellow no harm, but why did he go? Everybody echoed these words, and shook their heads again, having done which they wished John Podgers good night, and straggled home to bed.

The Kingston people were in their first sleep, when Will Marks and his conductor rode through the town and up to the door of a house where sundry grave functionaries were assembled, anxiously expecting the arrival of the renowned Podgers. They were a little disappointed to find a gay young man in his place, but they put the best face upon the matter, and gave him full instructions how he was to conceal himself behind the gibbet, and watch and listen to the witches, and how at a certain time he was to burst forth and cut and slash among them vigorously, so that the suspected parties might be found bleeding in their beds next day, and thoroughly confounded. They gave him a great quantity of wholesome advice besides, and — which was more to the purpose with Will — a good supper. All these things being done, and midnight nearly come, they sallied forth to show him the spot where he was to keep his dreary vigil.

The night was by this time dark and threatening. There was a rumbling of distant thunder, and a low sighing of wind among the trees, which was very dismal. The potentates of the town kept so uncommonly close to Will that they trod upon his toes, or stumbled against his ankles, or nearly tripped up his heels at every step he took, and, besides these annoyances, their teeth chattered so with fear that he seemed to be accompanied by a dirge of castanets.

At last they made a halt at the opening of a lonely, desolate space, and, pointing to a black object at some distance, asked Will if he saw that, yonder.

"Yes," he replied. "What then?"

Informing him abruptly that it was the gibbet where he was to watch, they wished him good night in an extremely friendly manner, and ran back as fast as their feet would carry them.

Will walked boldly to the gibbet, and, glancing upward when he came under it, saw — certainly with satisfaction — that it was empty, and that nothing dangled from the top but some iron chains, which swung mournfully to and fro as they were moved by the breeze. After a careful survey of every quarter, he determined to take his station with his face towards the town; both because that would place him with his back to the wind, and because if any trick or surprise were attempted, it would probably come from that direction in the first instance. Having taken these precautions, he wrapped his cloak about him so that it left the handle of his sword free, and ready to his hand, and leaning against the gallows-tree with his cap not quite so much on one side as it had been before, took up his position for the night.

SECOND CHAPTER OF MR. PICKWICK'S TALE.

We left Will Marks leaning under the gibbet with his face towards the town, scanning the distance with a keen eye, which sought to pierce the darkness and catch the earliest glimpse of any person or persons that might approach towards him. But all was quiet, and, save the howling of the wind as it swept across the heath in gusts, and the creaking of the chains that dangled above his head, there was no sound to break the sullen stillness of the night. After half an hour or so, this monotony became more disconcerting to Will than the most furious uproar would have been, and he heartily wished for some one antagonist with whom he might have a fair stand-up fight, if it were only to warm himself.

Truth to tell, it was a bitter wind, and seemed to blow to the very heart of a man whose blood, heated but now with rapid riding, was the more sensitive to the chilling blast. Will was a daring fellow, and cared not a jot for hard knocks or sharp blades; but he could not persuade himself to move or walk about, having just that vague expectation of a sudden assault which made it a comfort-

able thing to have something at his back, even though that something were a gallows-tree. He had no great faith in the superstitions of the age, still such of them as occurred to him did not serve to lighten the time, or to render his situation the more endurable. He remembered how witches were said to repair at that ghostly hour to churchyards and gibbets, and such like dismal spots, to pluck the bleeding mandrake or scrape the flesh from dead men's bones, as choice ingredients for their spells; how, stealing by night to lonely places, they dug graves with their finger-nails, or anointed themselves before riding in the air, with a delicate pomatum made of the fat of infants newly boiled. These, and many other fabled practices of a no less agreeable nature, and all having some reference to the circumstances in which he was placed, passed and repassed in quick succession through the mind of Will Marks, and adding a shadowy dread to that distrust and watchfulness which his situation inspired, rendered it, upon the whole, sufficiently uncomfortable. As he had foreseen, too, the rain began to descend heavily, and driving before the wind in a thick mist, obscured even those few objects which the darkness of the night had before imperfectly revealed.

"Look!" shrieked a voice; "Great Heaven, it has fallen down and stands erect as if it lived!"

The speaker was close behind him; the voice was almost at his ear. Will threw off his cloak, drew his sword, and darting swiftly round, seized a woman by the wrist, who recoiling from him with a dreadful shriek, fell struggling upon her knees. Another woman clad, like her whom he had grasped, in mourning garments, stood rooted to the spot on which they were, gazing upon his face with wild and glaring eyes that quite appalled him.

"Say," cried Will, when they had confronted each other thus for some time, "what are ye?"

"Say what are *you*," returned the woman, "who trouble even this obscene resting-place of the dead, and strip the gibbet of its honored burden? Where is the body?"

He looked in wonder and affright from the woman who questioned him, to the other whose arm he clutched.

"Where is the body?" repeated his questioner more

firmly than before. "You wear no livery which marks you for the hireling of the government. You are no friend to us, or I should recognize you, for the friends of such as we are few in number. What are you then, and wherefore are you here?"

"I am no foe to the distressed and helpless," said Will. "Are ye among that number? ye should be by your looks."

"We are!" was the answer.

"It is ye who have been wailing and weeping here under cover of the night?" said Will.

"It is," replied the woman sternly; and pointing, as she spoke, towards her companion, "she mourns a husband and I a brother. Even the bloody law that wreaks its vengeance on the dead does not make that a crime, and if it did 't would be alike to us who are past its fear or favor."

Will glanced at the two females, and could barely discern that the one whom he addressed was much the elder, and that the other was young and of a slight figure. Both were deadly pale, their garments wet and worn, their hair dishevelled and streaming in the wind, themselves bowed down with grief and misery; their whole appearance most dejected, wretched, and forlorn. A sight so different from any he had expected to encounter touched him to the quick, and all idea of anything but their pitiable condition vanished before it.

"I am a rough, blunt yeoman," said Will. "Why I came here is told in a word: you have been overheard at a distance in the silence of the night, and I have undertaken a watch for hags or spirits. I came here expecting an adventure, and prepared to go through with any. If there be aught that I can do to help or aid you, name it, and on the faith of a man who can be secret and trusty, I will stand by you to the death."

"How comes this gibbet to be empty?" asked the elder female.

"I swear to you," replied Will, "that I know as little as yourself. But this I know, that when I came here an hour ago or so, it was as it is now; and if, as I gather from your question, it was not so last night, sure I am that it has been secretly disturbed without the knowledge

of the folks in yonder town. Bethink you, therefore, whether you have no friends in league with you or with him on whom the law has done its worst, by whom these sad remains have been removed for burial."

The women spoke together, and Will retired a pace or two while they conversed apart. He could hear them sob and moan, and saw that they wrung their hands in fruitless agony. He could make out little that they said, but between whiles he gathered enough to assure him that his suggestion was not very wide of the mark, and that they not only suspected by whom the body had been removed, but also whither it had been conveyed. When they had been in conversation a long time, they turned towards him once more. This time the younger female spoke.

"You have offered us your help?"

"I have."

"And given a pledge that you are still willing to redeem?"

"Yes. So far as I may, keeping all plots and conspiracies at arm's length."

"Follow us, friend."

Will, whose self-possession was now quite restored, needed no second bidding, but with his drawn sword in his hand, and his cloak so muffled over his left arm as to serve for a kind of shield without offering any impediment to its free action, suffered them to lead the way. Through mud and mire, and wind and rain, they walked in silence a full mile. At length they turned into a dark lane, where, suddenly starting out from beneath some trees where he had taken shelter, a man appeared having in his charge three saddled horses. One of these (his own apparently), in obedience to a whisper from the women, he consigned to Will, who seeing that they mounted, mounted also. Then, without a word spoken, they rode on together, leaving the attendant behind.

They made no halt nor slackened their pace until they arrived near Putney. At a large wooden house which stood apart from any other they alighted, and giving their horses to one who was already waiting, passed in by a side door, and so up some narrow creaking stairs into a small panelled chamber, where Will was left

alone. He had not been here very long, when the door was softly opened, and there entered to him a cavalier whose face was concealed beneath a black mask.

Will stood upon his guard, and scrutinized this figure from head to foot. The form was that of a man pretty far advanced in life, but of a firm and stately carriage. His dress was of a rich and costly kind, but so soiled and disordered that it was scarcely to be recognized for one of those gorgeous suits which the expensive taste and fashion of the time prescribed for men of any rank or station. He was booted and spurred, and bore about him even as many tokens of the state of the roads as Will himself. All this he noted, while the eyes behind the mask regarded him with equal attention. This survey over, the cavalier broke silence.

"Thou 'rt young and bold, and wouldst be richer than thou art?"

"The two first I am," returned Will. "The last I have scarcely thought of. But be it so. Say that I would be richer than I am; what then?"

"The way lies before thee now," replied the Mask.

"Show it me."

"First let me inform thee, that thou wert brought here to-night lest thou shouldst too soon have told thy tale to those who placed thee on the watch."

"I thought as much when I followed," said Will. "But I am no blab, not I."

"Good," returned the Mask. "Now listen. He who was to have executed the enterprise of burying that body, which, as thou hast suspected, was taken down to-night, has left us in our need."

Will nodded, and thought within himself that if the Mask were to attempt to play any tricks, the first eyelet-hole on the left-hand side of his doublet, counting from the buttons up the front, would be a very good place in which to pink him neatly.

"Thou art here, and the emergency is desperate. I propose his task to thee. Convey the body (now confined in this house) by means that I shall show, to the church of Saint Dunstan in London to-morrow night, and thy service shall be richly paid. Thou 'rt about to ask whose corpse it is. Seek not to know. I warn thee,

seek not to know. Felons hang in chains on every moor and heath. Believe, as others do, that this was one, and ask no further. The murders of state policy, its victims or avengers, had best remain unknown to such as thee."

"The mystery of this service," said Will, "bespeaks its danger. What is the reward?"

"One hundred golden unities," replied the cavalier. "The danger to one who cannot be recognized as the friend of a fallen cause is not great, but there is some hazard to be run. Decide between that and the reward."

"What if I refuse?" said Will.

"Depart in peace, in God's name," returned the Mask in a melancholy tone, "and keep our secret, remembering that those who brought thee here were crushed and stricken women, and that those who bade thee go free could have had thy life with one word, and no man the wiser."

Men were readier to undertake desperate adventures in those times, than they are now. In this case the temptation was great, and the punishment, even in case of detection, was not likely to be very severe, as Will came of a loyal stock, and his uncle was in good repute, and a passable tale to account for his possession of the body and his ignorance of the identity might be easily devised. The cavalier explained that a covered cart had been prepared for the purpose; that the time of departure could be arranged so that he should reach London Bridge at dusk, and proceed through the City after the day had closed in; that people would be ready at his journey's end to place the coffin in a vault without a minute's delay; that officious inquirers in the streets would be easily repelled by the tale that he was carrying for interment the corpse of one who had died of the plague; and in short showed him every reason why he should succeed, and none why he should fail. After a time they were joined by another gentleman, masked like the first, who added new arguments to those which had been already urged; the wretched wife, too, added her tears and prayers to their calmer representations; and in the end, Will, moved by compassion and good-nature, by a love of the marvellous, by a mischievous anticipation of the terrors of the Kingston people when he should be

missing next day, and finally, by the prospect of gain, took upon himself the task, and devoted all his energies to its successful execution.

The following night, when it was quite dark, the hollow echoes of old London Bridge responded to the rumbling of the cart which contained the ghastly load, the object of Will Marks's care. Sufficiently disguised to attract no attention by his garb, Will walked at the horse's head, as unconcerned as a man could be who was sensible that he had now arrived at the most dangerous part of his undertaking, but full of boldness and confidence.

It was now eight o'clock. After nine, none could walk the streets without danger of their lives, and even at this hour, robberies and murder were of no uncommon occurrence. The shops upon the bridge were all closed; the low wooden arches thrown across the way were like so many black pits, in every one of which ill-favored fellows lurked in knots of three or four; some standing upright against the wall, lying in wait; others skulking in gateways, and thrusting out their uncombed heads and scowling eyes; others crossing and recrossing, and constantly jostling both horse and man to provoke a quarrel; others stealing away and summoning their companions in a low whistle. Once, even in that short passage, there was the noise of scuffling and the clash of swords behind him, but Will, who knew the city and its ways, kept straight on and scarcely turned his head.

The streets being unpaved, the rain of the night before had converted them into a perfect quagmire, which the splashing water-spouts from the gables, and the filth and offal cast from the different houses, swelled in no small degree. These odious matters being left to putrefy in the close and heavy air, emitted an insupportable stench, to which every court and passage poured forth a contribution of its own. Many parts, even of the main streets, with their projecting stories tottering overhead and nearly shutting out the sky, were more like huge chimneys than open ways. At the corners of some of these, great bonfires were burning to prevent infection from the plague, of which it was rumored that some citizens had lately died; and few, who availing themselves of the light thus afforded paused for a moment to look

around them, would have been disposed to doubt the existence of the disease, or wonder at its dreadful visitations.

But it was not in such scenes as these, or even in the deep and miry road, that Will Marks found the chief obstacles to his progress. There were kites and ravens feeding in the streets (the only scavengers the City kept), who, scenting what he carried, followed the cart or fluttered on its top, and croaked their knowledge of its burden and their ravenous appetite for prey. There were distant fires, where the poor wood and plaster tenements wasted fiercely, and whither crowds made their way, clamoring eagerly for plunder, beating down all who came within their reach, and yelling like devils let loose. There were single-handed men flying from bands of ruffians, who pursued them with naked weapons, and hunted them savagely; there were drunken, desperate robbers issuing from their dens and staggering through the open streets where no man dared molest them; there were vagabond servitors returning from the Bear Garden, where had been good sport that day, dragging after them their torn and bleeding dogs, or leaving them to die and rot upon the road. Nothing was abroad but cruelty, violence, and disorder.

Many were the interruptions which Will Marks encountered from these stragglers, and many the narrow escapes he made. Now some stout bully would take his seat upon the cart, insisting to be driven to his own home, and now two or three men would come down upon him together and demand that on peril of his life he showed them what he had inside. Then a party of the City Watch, upon their rounds, would draw across the road, and not satisfied with his tale, question him closely and revenge themselves by a little cuffing and hustling for maltreatment sustained at other hands that night. All these assailants had to be rebutted, some by fair words, some by foul, and some by blows. But Will Marks was not the man to be stopped or turned back now he had penetrated so far, and though he got on slowly, still he made his way down Fleet Street and reached the church at last.

As he had been forewarned, all was in readiness.

Directly he stopped, the coffin was removed by four men, who appeared so suddenly that they seemed to have started from the earth. A fifth mounted the cart, and scarcely allowing Will time to snatch from it a little bundle containing such of his own clothes as he had thrown off on assuming his disguise, drove briskly away. Will never saw cart or man again.

He followed the body into the church, and it was well he lost no time in doing so, for the door was immediately closed. There was no light in the building save that which came from a couple of torches borne by two men in cloaks, who stood upon the brink of a vault. Each supported a female figure, and all observed a profound silence.

By this dim and solemn glare, which made Will feel as though light itself were dead, and its tomb the dreary arches that frowned above, they placed the coffin in the vault, with uncovered heads, and closed it up. One of the torch-bearers then turned to Will and stretched forth his hand, in which was a purse of gold. Something told him directly that those were the same eyes which he had seen beneath the mask.

"Take it," said the cavalier in a low voice, "and be happy. Though these have been hasty obsequies, and no priest has blessed the work, there will not be the less peace with thee hereafter, for having laid his bones beside those of his little children. Keep thy own counsel, for thy sake no less than ours, and God be with thee!"

"The blessing of a widowed mother on thy head, good friend!" cried the younger lady through her tears; "the blessing of one who has now no hope or rest but in this grave!"

Will stood with the purse in his hand, and involuntarily made a gesture as though he would return it, for though a thoughtless fellow, he was of a frank and generous nature. But the two gentlemen, extinguishing their torches, cautioned him to be gone, as their common safety would be endangered by a longer delay; and at the same time their retreating footsteps sounded through the church. He turned, therefore, towards the point at which he had entered, and seeing by a faint gleam in the distance that the door was again partially open, groped his way towards it and so passed into the street.

Meantime the local authorities of Kingston had kept watch and ward all the previous night, fancying every now and then that dismal shrieks were borne towards them on the wind, and frequently winking to each other, and drawing closer to the fire as they drank the health of the lonely sentinel, upon whom a clerical gentleman present was especially severe by reason of his levity and youthful folly. Two or three of the gravest in company, who were of a theological turn, propounded to him the question, whether such a character was not but poorly armed for single combat with the Devil, and whether he himself would not have been a stronger opponent; but the clerical gentleman, sharply reproving them for their presumption in discussing such questions, clearly showed that a fitter champion than Will could scarcely have been selected, not only for that being a child of Satan, he was the less likely to be alarmed by the appearance of his own father, but because Satan himself would be at his ease in such company, and would not scruple to kick up his heels to an extent which it was quite certain he would never venture before clerical eyes, under whose influence (as was notorious) he became quite a tame and milk-and-water character.

But when next morning arrived, and with it no Will Marks, and when a strong party repairing to the spot, as a strong party ventured to do in broad day, found Will gone and the gibbet empty, matters grew serious indeed. The day passing away and no news arriving, and the night going on also without any intelligence, the thing grew more tremendous still; in short, the neighborhood worked itself up to such a comfortable pitch of mystery and horror, that it is a great question whether the general feeling was not one of excessive disappointment, when, on the second morning, Will Marks returned.

However this may be, back Will came in a very cool and collected state, and appearing not to trouble himself much about anybody except old John Podgers, who having been sent for, was sitting in the Town Hall crying slowly, and dozing between whiles. Having embraced his uncle and assured him of his safety, Will mounted on a table and told his story to the crowd.

And surely they would have been the most unreasonable crowd that ever assembled together, if they had been in the least respect disappointed with the tale he told them ; for besides describing the Witches' Dance to the minutest motion of their legs, and performing it in character on the table, with the assistance of a broomstick, he related how they had carried off the body in a copper caldron, and so bewitched him, that he lost his senses until he found himself lying under a hedge at least ten miles off, whence he had straightway returned as they then beheld. The story gained such universal applause that it soon afterwards brought down express from London the great witch-finder of the age, the Heaven-born Hopkins, who having examined Will closely on several points, pronounced it the most extraordinary and the best accredited witch story ever known, under which title it was published at the Three Bibles on London Bridge, in small quarto, with a view of the caldron from an original drawing, and a portrait of the clerical gentleman as he sat by the fire.

On one point Will was particularly careful : and that was to describe for the witches he had seen, three impossible old females, whose likenesses never were or will be. Thus he saved the lives of the suspected parties, and of all other old women who were dragged before him to be identified.

This circumstance occasioned John Podgers much grief and sorrow, until happening one day to cast his eyes upon his housekeeper, and observing her to be plainly afflicted with rheumatism, he procured her to be burnt as an undoubted witch. For this service to the state he was immediately knighted, and became from that time Sir John Podgers.

Will Marks never gained any clew to the mystery in which he had been an actor, nor did any inscription in the church, which he often visited afterwards, nor any of the limited inquiries that he dared to make, yield him the least assistance. As he kept his own secret, he was compelled to spend the gold discreetly and sparingly. In the course of time he married the young lady of whom I have already told you, whose maiden name is not recorded, with whom he led a prosperous and happy

life. Years and years after this adventure, it was his wont to tell her upon a stormy night that it was a great comfort to him, to think those bones, to whomsoever they might have once belonged, were not bleaching in the troubled air, but were mouldering away with the dust of their own kith and kindred in a quiet grave.

FURTHER PARTICULARS OF MASTER HUMPHREY'S VISITOR.

Being very full of Mr. Pickwick's application, and highly pleased with the compliment he had paid me, it will be readily supposed that long before our next night of meeting I communicated it to my three friends, who unanimously voted his admission into our body. We all looked forward with some impatience to the occasion which would enroll him among us, but I am greatly mistaken if Jack Redburn and myself were not by many degrees the most impatient of the party.

At length the night came, and a few minutes after ten Mr. Pickwick's knock was heard at the street door. He was shown into a lower room, and I directly took my crooked stick and went to accompany him up stairs, in order that he might be presented with all honor and formality.

"Mr. Pickwick," said I on entering the room, "I am rejoiced to see you, — rejoiced to believe that this is but the opening of a long series of visits to this house, and but the beginning of a close and lasting friendship."

That gentleman made a suitable reply with a cordiality and frankness peculiarly his own, and glanced with a smile towards two persons behind the door, whom I had not at first observed, and whom I immediately recognized as Mr. Samuel Weller and his father.

It was a warm evening, but the elder Mr. Weller was attired, notwithstanding, in a most capacious great-coat, and his chin enveloped in a large speckled shawl, such as is usually worn by stage coachmen on active service. He looked very rosy and very stout, especially about the legs, which appeared to have been compressed into his top-boots with some difficulty. His broad-brimmed hat he held under his left arm, and with the forefinger of his

right hand he touched his forehead a great many times in acknowledgment of my presence.

"I am very glad to see you in such good health, Mr. Weller," said I.

"Why, thankee sir," returned Mr. Weller, "the axle an't broke yet. We keeps up a steady pace, — not too sewere but vith a moderate degree o' friction, — and the consekens is that ve're still a runnin' and comes in to the time reg'lar. — My son Samivel, sir, as you may have read on in history," added Mr. Weller, introducing his first-born.

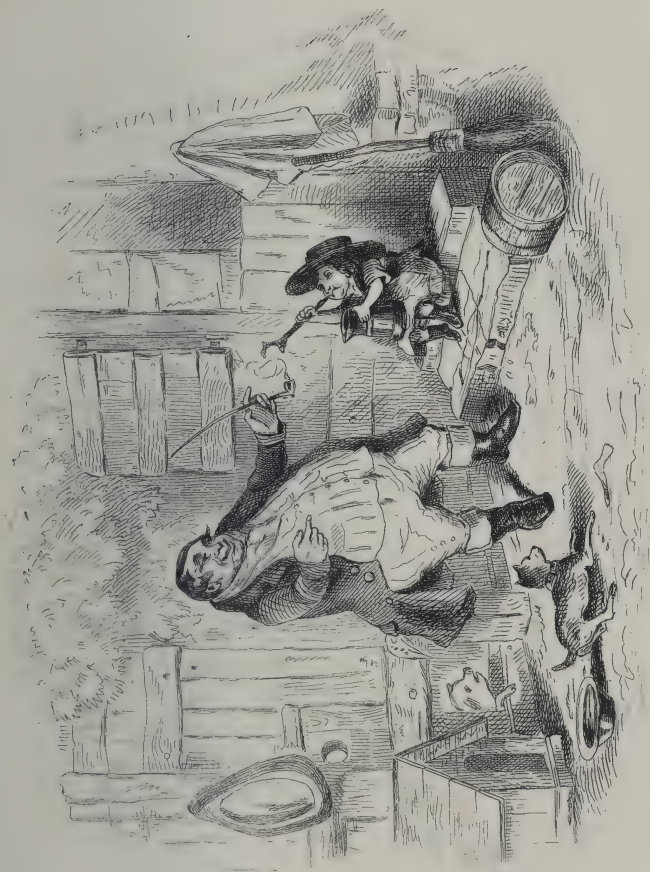
I received Sam very graciously, but before he could say a word his father struck in again.

"Samivel Veller, sir," said the old gentleman, "has conferred upon me the ancient title o' grandfather vich had long laid dormouse, and vos s'posed to be nearly hex-tinct in our family. Sammy, relate a anecdote o' vun o' them boys, — that 'ere little anecdote about young Tony sayin' as he *could* smoke a pipe unbeknown to his mother."

"Be quiet, can't you?" said Sam; "I never see such a old magpie — never!"

"That 'ere Tony is the blessedest boy," said Mr. Weller, heedless of this rebuff, "the blessedest boy as ever *I* see in *my* days! of all the charmin'est infants as ever I heerd tell on, includin' them as vos kivered over by the robin-redbreasts arter they'd committed soocide with blackberries, there never vos any like that 'ere little Tony. He's alvays a playin' vith a quart pot, that boy is! To see him a settin' down on the doorstep pretending to drink out of it, and fetchin' a long breath artervards, and smoking a bit of fire-wood and sayin', 'Now I'm grandfather,' — to see him a doin' that at two year old is better than any play as vos ever wrote. 'Now I'm grandfather!' He would n't take a pint pot if you vos to make him a present on it, but he gets his quart and then he says, 'Now I'm grandfather!'"

Mr. Weller was so overpowered by this picture that he straightway fell into a most alarming fit of coughing, which must certainly have been attended with some fatal result but for the dexterity and promptitude of Sam, who, taking a firm grasp of the shawl just under his father's



chin, shook him to and fro with great violence, at the same time administering some smart blows between his shoulders. By this curious mode of treatment Mr. Weller was finally recovered, but with a very crimson face, and in a state of great exhaustion.

"He 'll do now, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, who had been in some alarm himself.

"He 'll do, sir!" cried Sam, looking reproachfully at his parent. "Yes, he *will* do one o' these days, — he 'll do for his-self and then he 'll wish he had n't. Did anybody ever see sich a inconsiderate old file, — laughing into convulsions afore company, and stamping on the floor as if he 'd brought his own carpet with him and wos under a wager to punch the pattern out in a given time? He 'll begin again in a minute. There — he 's agoin' off — I said he would!"

In fact, Mr. Weller, whose mind was still running upon his precocious grandson, was seen to shake his head from side to side, while a laugh, working like an earthquake, below the surface, produced various extraordinary appearances in his face, chest, and shoulders, — the more alarming because unaccompanied by any noise whatever. These emotions, however, gradually subsided, and after three or four short relapses he wiped his eyes with the cuff of his coat, and looked about him with tolerable composure.

"Afore the governor vith-draws," said Mr. Weller, "there is a pint, respecting vich Sammy has a qvestion to ask. Vile that qvestion is a perwadin this here conversation, p'haps the genl'men vill permit me to re-tire."

"Wot are you goin' away for?" demanded Sam, seizing his father by the coat-tail.

"I never see such a undootiful boy as you, Samivel," returned Mr. Weller. "Did n't you make a solemn promise, amountin' almost to a speeches o' wow, that you 'd put that ere qvestion on my account?"

"Well, I 'm agreeable to do it," said Sam, "but not if you go cuttin' away like that, as the bull turned round and mildly observed to the drover ven they wos a goadin' him into the butcher's door. The fact is, sir," said Sam, addressing me, "that he wants to know somethin' respectin' that 'ere lady as is housekeeper here."

"Ay. What is that?"

"Vy, sir," said Sam, grinning still more, "he wishes to know vether she —"

"In short," interposed old Mr. Weller, decisively, a perspiration breaking out upon his forehead, "vether that old 'ere old creetur is or is not a widder."

Mr. Pickwick laughed heartily, and so did I, as I replied, decisively, that "my housekeeper was a spinster."

"There!" cried Sam, "now you're satisfied. You hear she's a spinster."

"A wot?" said his father, with deep scorn

"A spinster," replied Sam.

Mr. Weller looked very hard at his son for a minute or two, and then said, —

"Never mind vether she makes jokes or not, that's no matter. Wot I say is, is that 'ere female a widder, or is she not?"

"Wot do you mean by her making jokes?" demanded Sam, quite aghast at the obscurity of his parent's speech.

"Never you mind, Samivel," returned Mr. Weller, gravely; "puns may be very good things or they may be very bad 'uns, and a female may be none the better or she may be none the vurse for making of 'em; that's got nothing to do vith widders."

"Wy now," said Sam, looking round, "would anybody believe as a man at his time o' life could be a running his head agin spinsters and punsters being the same thing?"

"There an't a straw's difference between 'em," said Mr. Weller. "Your father did n't drive a coach for so many years, not to be ekal to his own langvidge as far as *that* goes, Sammy."

Avoiding the question of etymology, upon which the old gentleman's mind was quite made up, he was several times assured that the housekeeper had never been married. He expressed great satisfaction on hearing this, and apologized for the question, remarking that he had been greatly terrified by a widow not long before, and that his natural timidity was increased in consequence.

"It wos on the rail," said Mr. Weller, with strong emphasis; "I wos a goin' down to Birmingham by the rail, and I wos locked up in a close carriage vith a living wid-

der. Alone we wos; the widder and me wos alone; and I believe it wos only because we *wos* alone and there wos no clergyman in the conveyance, that that 'ere widder did n't marry me afore ve reached the half-way station. Ven I think how she began a screaming as we wos a goin' under them tunnels in the dark, — how she kept on a faintin' and ketchin' hold o' me, — and how I tried to bust open the door as was tight-locked and perwented all escape — Ah! It was a awful thing, most awful!"

Mr. Weller was so very much overcome by this retrospect that he was unable, until he had wiped his brow several times, to return any reply to the question whether he approved of railway communication, notwithstanding that it would appear from the answer which he ultimately gave, that he entertained strong opinions on the subject.

"I con-sider," said Mr. Weller, "that the rail is un-constitootional and an inwaser o' priwileges, and I should very much like to know what that 'ere old Carter as once stood up for our liberties and wun 'em too, — I should like to know wot he vould say if he wos alive now, to Englishmen being locked up with widders, or with anybody again their wills. Wot a old Carter would have said, a old Coachman may say, and I as-assert that in that pint o' view alone, the rail is an inwaser. As to the comfort, vere 's the comfort o' sittin' in a harm-cheer lookin' at brick walls or heaps o' mud, never comin' to a public-house, never seein' a glass o' ale, never goin' through a pike, never meetin' a change o' no kind (horses or otherwise), but always comin' to a place, ven you come to one at all, the wery picter o' the last, vith the same p'leesemen standing about, the same blessed old bell a ringin', the same unfort'nate people standing behind the bars, a waitin' to be let in; and everythin' the same except the name, vich is wrote up in the same sized letters as the last name, and vith the same colors. As to the honor and dignity o' travellin', vere can that be vithout a coachman; and wot 's the rail to sich coachmen and guards as is sometimes forced to go by it, but a outrage and a insult? As to the pace, wot sort o' pace do you think I, Tony Veller, could have kept a coach goin' at, for five hundred thousand pound a mile, paid in advance afore the coach was on the road? And as to the ingein,

— a nasty, wheezin', creaking, gasping, puffin', bustin' monster, always out o' breath, with a shiny green and gold back, like a unpleasant beetle in that 'ere gas magnifier, — as to the ingein as is always a pourin' out red-hot coals at night, and black smoke in the day, the sensiblest thing it does in my opinion, is, ven there 's somethin' in the vay and it sets up that 'ere frightful scream vich seems to say, "Now here 's two hundred and forty passengers in the wery greatest extremity o' danger, and here 's their two hundred and forty screams in vun!"

By this time I began to fear that my friends would be rendered impatient by my protracted absence. I therefore begged Mr. Pickwick to accompany me up stairs, and left the two Mr. Wellers in the care of the housekeeper, laying strict injunctions upon her to treat them with all possible hospitality.

MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK.

IV.

THE CLOCK.

As we were going up stairs, Mr. Pickwick put on his spectacles, which he had held in his hand hitherto ; arranged his neckerchief, smoothed down his waistcoat, and made many other little preparations of that kind which men are accustomed to be mindful of, when they are going among strangers for the first time, and are anxious to impress them pleasantly. Seeing that I smiled, he smiled too, and said that if it had occurred to him before he left home, he would certainly have presented himself in pumps and silk stockings.

"I would, indeed, my dear sir," he said very seriously ; "I would have shown my respect for the society, by laying aside my gaiters."

"You may rest assured," said I, "that they would have regretted your doing so very much, for they are quite attached to them."

"No, really !" cried Mr. Pickwick, with manifest pleasure. "Do you think they care about my gaiters ? Do you seriously think that they identify me at all with my gaiters ?"

"I am sure they do," I replied.

"Well, now," said Mr. Pickwick, "that is one of the most charming and agreeable circumstances that could possibly have occurred to me !"

I should not have written down this short conversation, but that it developed a slight point in Mr. Pickwick's character, with which I was not previously acquainted. He has a secret pride in his legs. The manner in which he spoke, and the accompanying glance

he bestowed upon his tights, convince me that Mr. Pickwick regards his legs with much innocent vanity.

"But here are our friends," said I, opening the door and taking his arm in mine; "let them speak for themselves. Gentlemen, I present to you Mr. Pickwick."

Mr. Pickwick and I must have been a good contrast just then. I, leaning quietly on my crutch-stick, with something of a care-worn, patient air; he, having hold of my arm, and bowing in every direction with the most elastic politeness, and an expression of face whose sprightly cheerfulness and good-humor knew no bounds. The difference between us must have been more striking yet, as we advanced towards the table, and the amiable gentleman, adapting his jocund step to my poor tread, had his attention divided between treating my infirmities with the utmost consideration, and affecting to be wholly unconscious that I required any.

I made him personally known to each of my friends in turn. First, to the deaf gentleman, whom he regarded with much interest, and accosted with great frankness and cordiality. He had evidently some vague idea, at the moment, that my friend being deaf must be dumb also; for when the latter opened his lips to express the pleasure it afforded him to know a gentleman of whom he had heard so much, Mr. Pickwick was so extremely disconcerted, that I was obliged to step in to his relief.

His meeting with Jack Redburn was quite a treat to see. Mr. Pickwick smiled, and shook hands, and looked at him through his spectacles, and under them, and over them, and nodded his head approvingly, and then nodded to me, as much as to say, "This is just the man; you were quite right"; and then turned to Jack and said a few hearty words, and then did and said everything over again with unimpaired vivacity. As to Jack himself, he was quite as much delighted with Mr. Pickwick, as Mr. Pickwick could possibly be with him. Two people never can have met together since the world began, who exchanged a warmer or more enthusiastic greeting.

It was amusing to observe the difference between this encounter, and that which succeeded, between Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Miles. It was clear that the latter gentle-

man viewed our new member as a kind of rival in the affections of Jack Redburn, and besides this, he had more than once hinted to me, in secret, that although he had no doubt Mr. Pickwick was a very worthy man, still he did consider that some of his exploits were unbecoming a gentleman of his years and gravity. Over and above these grounds of distrust, it is one of his fixed opinions, that the law never can by possibility do anything wrong; he therefore looks upon Mr. Pickwick as one who has justly suffered in purse and peace for a breach of his plighted faith to an unprotected female, and holds that he is called upon to regard him with some suspicion on that account. These causes led to a rather cold and formal reception; which Mr. Pickwick acknowledged with the same stateliness and intense politeness as was displayed on the other side. Indeed, he assumed an air of such majestic defiance that I was fearful he might break out into some solemn protest or declaration, and therefore inducted him into his chair without a moment's delay.

This piece of generalship was perfectly successful. The instant he took his seat, Mr. Pickwick surveyed us all with a most benevolent aspect, and was taken with a fit of smiling full five minutes long. His interest in our ceremonies was immense. They are not very numerous or complicated, and a description of them may be comprised in very few words. As our transactions have already been, and must necessarily continue to be, more or less anticipated by being presented in these pages at different times, and under various forms, they do not require a detailed account.

Our first proceeding when we are assembled is to shake hands all round, and greet each other with cheerful and pleasant looks. Remembering that we assemble not only for the promotion of our happiness, but with the view of adding something to the common stock, an air of languor or indifference in any member of our body, would be regarded by the others as a kind of treason. We have never had an offender in this respect; but if we had, there is no doubt that he would be taken to task pretty severely.

Our salutation over, the venerable piece of antiquity

from which we take our name is wound up in silence. This ceremony is always performed by Master Humphrey himself (in treating of the club, I may be permitted to assume the historical style, and speak of myself in the third person), who mounts upon a chair for the purpose, armed with a large key. While it is in progress, Jack Redburn is required to keep at the farther end of the room under the guardianship of Mr. Miles, for he is known to entertain certain aspiring and unhallowed thoughts connected with the clock, and has even gone so far as to state that if he might take the works out for a day or two, he thinks he could improve them. We pardon him his presumption in consideration of his good intentions, and his keeping this respectful distance, which last penalty is insisted on, lest by secretly wounding the object of our regard in some tender part, in the ardor of his zeal for its improvement, he should fill us with dismay and consternation.

This regulation afforded Mr. Pickwick the highest delight, and seemed, if possible, to exalt Jack in his good opinion.

The next ceremony is the opening of the clock-case (of which Master Humphrey has likewise the key), the taking from it as many papers as will furnish forth our evening's entertainment, and arranging in the recess such new contributions as have been provided since our last meeting. This is always done with peculiar solemnity. The deaf gentleman then fills and lights his pipe, and we once more take our seats round the table before-mentioned, Master Humphrey acting as president, — if we can be said to have any president, where all are on the same social footing, — and our friend Jack as secretary. Our preliminaries being now concluded, we fall into any train of conversation that happens to suggest itself, or proceed immediately to one of our readings. In the latter case, the paper selected is consigned to Master Humphrey, who flattens it carefully on the table and makes dog's ears in the corner of every page, ready for turning over easily; Jack Redburn trims the lamp with a small machine of his own invention which usually puts it out; Mr. Miles looks on with great approval notwithstanding; the deaf gentleman draws in his chair, so



that he can follow the words on the paper or on Master Humphrey's lips as he pleases; and Master Humphrey himself, looking round with mighty gratification, and glancing up at his old clock, begins to read aloud.

Mr. Pickwick's face, while his tale was being read, would have attracted the attention of the dullest man alive. The complacent motion of his head and forefinger as he gently beat time and corrected the air with imaginary punctuation, the smile that mantled on his features at every jocose passage, and the sly look he stole around to observe its effect, the calm manner in which he shut his eyes and listened when there was some little piece of description, the changing expression with which he acted the dialogue to himself, his agony that the deaf gentleman should know what it was all about, and his extraordinary anxiety to correct the reader when he hesitated at a word in the manuscript, or substituted a wrong one, were alike worthy of remark. And when at last, endeavoring to communicate with the deaf gentleman by means of the finger alphabet, with which he constructed such words as are unknown in any civilized or savage language, he took up a slate and wrote in large text, one word in a line, the question, "How — do — you — like — it?" When he did this, and handing it over the table awaited the reply, with a countenance only brightened and improved by his great excitement, even Mr. Miles relaxed, and could not forbear looking at him for the moment with interest and favor.

"It has occurred to me," said the deaf gentleman, who had watched Mr. Pickwick and everybody else with silent satisfaction, — "it has occurred to me," said the deaf gentleman, taking his pipe from his lips, "that now is our time for filling our only empty chair."

As our conversation had naturally turned upon the vacant seat, we lent a willing ear to this remark, and looked at our friend inquiringly.

"I feel sure," said he, "that Mr. Pickwick must be acquainted with somebody who would be an acquisition to us; that he must know the man we want. Pray let us not lose any time, but set this question at rest. Is it so, Mr. Pickwick?"

The gentleman addressed was about to return a verbal reply, but remembering our friend's infirmity, he substituted for this kind of answer some fifty nods. Then taking up the slate and printing on it a gigantic "Yes," he handed it across the table, and rubbing his hands as he looked round upon our faces, protested that he and the deaf gentleman quite understood each other, already.

"The person I have in my mind," said Mr. Pickwick, "and whom I should not have presumed to mention to you until some time hence, but for the opportunity you have given me, is a very strange old man. His name is Bamber."

"Bamber!" said Jack. "I have certainly heard the name before."

"I have no doubt, then," returned Mr. Pickwick, "that you remember him in those adventures of mine (the Posthumous Papers of our old club, I mean), although he is only incidentally mentioned; and, if I remember right, appears but once."

"That's it," said Jack. "Let me see. He is the person who has a grave interest in old mouldy chambers and the Inns of Court, and who relates some anecdotes having reference to his favorite theme, — and an odd ghost-story, — is that the man?"

"The very same. Now," said Mr. Pickwick, lowering his voice to a mysterious and confidential tone, "he is a very extraordinary and remarkable person; living, and talking, and looking, like some strange spirit, whose delight is to haunt old buildings; and absorbed in that one subject which you have just mentioned, to an extent which is quite wonderful. When I retired into private life, I sought him out, and I do assure you that the more I see of him, the more strongly I am impressed with the strange and dreamy character of his mind."

"Where does he live?" I inquired.

"He lives," said Mr. Pickwick, "in one of those dull, lonely old places with which his thoughts and stories are all connected; quite alone, and often shut up close, for several weeks together. In this dusty solitude he broods upon the fancies he has so long indulged, and when he goes into the world, or anybody from the world without

goes to see him, they are still present to his mind and still his favorite topic. I may say, I believe, that he has brought himself to entertain a regard for me, and an interest in my visits; feelings which I am certain he would extend to Master Humphrey's Clock if he were once tempted to join us. All I wish you to understand is, that he is a strange secluded visionary, in the world but not of it; and as unlike anybody here as he is unlike anybody elsewhere that I have ever met or known."

Mr. Miles received this account of our proposed companion with rather a wry face, and after murmuring that perhaps he was a little mad, inquired if he were rich.

"I never asked him," said Mr. Pickwick.

"You might know, sir, for all that," retorted Mr. Miles, sharply.

"Perhaps so, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, no less sharply than the other, "but I do not. Indeed," he added, relapsing into his usual mildness, "I have no means of judging. He lives poorly, but that would seem to be in keeping with his character. I never heard him allude to his circumstances, and never fell into the society of any man who had the slightest acquaintance with them. I have really told you all I know about him, and it rests with you to say whether you wish to know more, or know quite enough already."

We were unanimously of opinion that we would seek to know more; and as a sort of compromise with Mr. Miles (who, although he said "Yes—O certainly—he should like to know more about the gentleman—he had no right to put himself in opposition to the general wish," and so forth, shook his head doubtfully and hemmed several times with peculiar gravity), it was arranged that Mr. Pickwick should carry me with him on an evening visit to the subject of our discussion, for which purpose an early appointment between that gentleman and myself was immediately agreed upon; it being understood that I was to act upon my own responsibility, and to invite him to join us or not, as I might think proper. This solemn question determined, we returned to the clock-case (where we have been forestalled by the reader), and

between its contents, and the conversation they occasioned, the remainder of our time passed very quickly.

When we broke up, Mr. Pickwick took me aside to tell me that he had spent a most charming and delightful evening. Having made this communication with an air of the strictest secrecy, he took Jack Redburn into another corner to tell him the same, and then retired into another corner with the deaf gentleman and the slate, to repeat the assurance. It was amusing to observe the contest in his mind whether he should extend his confidence to Mr. Miles, or treat him with dignified reserve. Half a dozen times he stepped up behind him with a friendly air, and as often stepped back again without saying a word; at last, when he was close at that gentleman's ear and upon the very point of whispering something conciliating and agreeable, Mr. Miles happened suddenly to turn his head, upon which Mr. Pickwick skipped away, and said with some fierceness, "Good night, sir, — I was about to say good night, sir, — nothing more"; and so made a bow and left him.

"Now, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, when he had got down stairs.

"All right, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Hold hard, sir. Right arm fust — now the left — now one strong convulsion, and the great-coat's on, sir."

Mr. Pickwick acted upon these directions, and being further assisted by Sam, who pulled at one side of the collar, and Mr. Weller, who pulled hard at the other, was speedily enrobed. Mr. Weller senior then produced a full-sized stable lantern, which he had carefully deposited in a remote corner, on his arrival, and inquired whether Mr. Pickwick would have "the lamps alight."

"I think not to-night," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Then if this here lady vill per-mit," rejoined Mr. Weller, "we'll leave it here, ready for next journey. This here lantern, mum," said Mr. Weller, handing it to the housekeeper, "vunce belonged to the celebrated Bill Blinder as is now at grass, as all on us vill be in our turns. Bill, mum, wos the hostler as had charge o' them two vell-known piebald leaders that run in the Bristol fast coach, and vould never go to no other tune but a sutherly vind and a cloudy sky, which wos consekvently

played incessant, by the guard, whenever they was on duty. He was took wery bad one arternoon, arter having been off his feed, and wery shaky on his legs for some weeks; and he says to his mate, 'Matey,' he says, 'I think I'm a-goin' the wrong side o' the post, and that my foot's wery near the bucket. Don't say I an't,' he says, 'for I know I am, and don't let me be interrupted,' he says, 'for I've saved a little money, and I'm a-goin' into the stable to make my last vill and testymint.' 'I'll take care as nobody interrupts,' says his mate, 'but you on'y hold up your head, and shake your ears a bit, and you're good for twenty years to come.' Bill Blinder makes him no answer, but he goes away into the stable, and there he soon arterwards lays himself down a'tween the two piebalds, and dies, — previously a-writin' outside the corn-chest, 'This is the last vill and testymint of William Blinder.' They was nat'rally wery much amazed at this, and arter looking among the litter, and up in the loft, and vere not, they opens the corn-chest, and finds that he'd been and chalked his vill inside the lid; so the lid was obligated to be took off the hinges, and sent up to Doctor Commons to be proved, and under that 'ere wery instrument this here lantern was passed to 'Tony Veller; vich circumstarnece, mum, gives it a wally in my eyes, and makes me rekvest, if you vill be so kind, as to take partickler care on it."

The housekeeper graciously promised to keep the object of Mr. Weller's regard in the safest possible custody, and Mr. Pickwick, with a laughing face, took his leave. The body-guard followed, side by side; old Mr. Weller buttoned and wrapped up from his boots to his chin; and Sam with his hands in his pockets and his hat half off his head, remonstrating with his father, as he went, on his extreme loquacity.

I was not a little surprised, on turning to go up stairs, to encounter the barber in the passage at that late hour; for his attendance is usually confined to some half-hour in the morning. But Jack Redburn, who finds out (by instinct, I think) everything that happens in the house, informed me with great glee, that a society in imitation of our own had been that night formed in the kitchen, under the title of "Mr. Weller's Watch," of which the

barber was a member ; and that he could pledge himself to find means of making me acquainted with the whole of its future proceedings, which I begged him, both on my own account and that of my readers, by no means to neglect doing.*

* * * *

* Old Curiosity Shop is continued here, completing No. IV.



MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK.

V.

MR. WELLER'S WATCH.

It seems that the housekeeper and the two Mr. Wellers were no sooner left together on the occasion of their first becoming acquainted, than the housekeeper called to her assistance Mr. Slithers the barber, who had been lurking in the kitchen in expectation of her summons; and with many smiles and much sweetness introduced him as one who would assist her in the responsible office of entertaining her distinguished visitors.

"Indeed," said she, "without Mr. Slithers I should have been placed in quite an awkward situation."

"There is no call for any hock'erdness, mum," said Mr. Weller with the utmost politeness; "no call wotsum-ever. A lady," added the old gentleman, looking about him with the air of one who establishes an incontrovertible position, — "a lady can't be hock'erd. Natur has otherwise purwided."

The housekeeper inclined her head and smiled yet more sweetly. The barber, who had been fluttering about Mr. Weller and Sam in a state of great anxiety to improve their acquaintance, rubbed his hands and cried, "Hear, hear! Very true, sir"; whereupon Sam turned about and steadily regarded him for some seconds in silence.

"I never knew," said Sam, fixing his eyes in a ruminative manner upon the blushing barber, — "I never knew but vun o' your trade, but *he* wos worth a dozen, and wos indeed dewoted to his callin'!"

"Was he in the easy shaving way, sir," inquired Mr. Slithers; "or in the cutting and curling line?"

"Both," replied Sam; "easy shavin' was his natur', and cuttin' and curlin' was his pride and glory. His whole delight was in his trade. He spent all his money in bears, and run in debt for 'em besides, and there they was a growling away down in the front cellar all day long, and ineffectooally gnashing their teeth, vile the grease o' there relations and friends was being re-tailed in gallipots in the shop above, and the first-floor winder was ornamented vith their heads; not to speak o' the dreadful aggrawation it must have been to 'em to see a man always a walkin' up and down the pavement outside, vith the portrait of a bear in his last agonies, and underneath in large letters, "Another fine animal was slaughtered yesterday at Jinkinson's!" Hows'ever, there they was, and there Jinkinson was, till he was took wery ill with some inn'ard disorder, lost the use of his legs, and was confined to his bed vere he laid a wery long time, but sich was his pride in his profession, even then, that wenever he was worse than usual the doctor used to go down stairs and say, 'Jinkinson 's wery low this mornin'; we must give the bears a stir'; and as sure as ever they stirred 'em up a bit and made 'em roar, Jinkinson opens his eyes if he was ever so bad, calls out, 'There 's the bears!' and rewives agin."

"Astonishing!" cried the barber.

"Not a bit," said Sam, "human natur' neat as imported. Vun day the doctor happenin' to say, 'I shall look in as usual to-morrow mornin',' Jinkinson catches hold of his hand and says, 'Doctor,' he says, 'will you grant me one favor?' 'I will, Jinkinson,' says the doctor. 'Then, doctor,' says Jinkinson, 'vill you come unshaved, and let me shave you?' 'I will,' says the doctor. 'God bless you,' says Jinkinson. Next day the doctor came, and arter he 'd been shaved all skilful and reg'lar, he says, 'Jinkinson,' he says, 'it 's wery plain this does you good. Now,' he says, 'I 've got a coachman as has got a beard that it 'ud warm your heart to work on, and though the footman,' he says, 'has n't got much of a beard, still he 's a tryin' it on vith a pair o' viskers to that extent that razors is Christian charity. If they take it in turns to mind the carriage wen it 's a waitin' below,' he says, 'wot 's to

hinder you from operatin' on both of 'em ev'ry day as well as upon me? you 've got six children,' he says, 'wot 's to hinder you from shavin' all their heads and keepin' 'em shaved? you 've got two assistants in the shop down stairs, wot 's to hinder you from cuttin' and curlin' them as often as you like? Do this,' he says, 'and you 're a man agin.' Jinkinson squeedged the doctor's hand and begun that wery day; he kept his tools upon the bed, and wenever he felt his-self gettin' worse, he turned to at vun o' the children who wos a runnin' about the house vith heads like clean Dutch cheeses, and shaved him agin. Vun day the lawyer come to make his vill; all the time he wos a takin' it down, Jinkinson was secretly a clippin' away at his hair vith a large pair of scissors. 'Wot 's that 'ere snippin' noise?' says the lawyer every now and then; 'it 's like a man havin' his hair cut.' 'It is wery like a man havin' his hair cut,' says poor Jinkinson, hidin' the scissors, and lookin' quite innocent. By the time the lawyer found it out, he was wery nearly bald. Jinkinson wos kept alive in this vay for a long time, but at last vun day he has in all the children vun arter another, shaves each on 'em wery clean, and gives him vun kiss on the crown o' his head; then he has in the two assistants, and arter cuttin' and curlin' of 'em in the first style of elegance, says he should like to hear the woice o' the greasiest bear, vich rekvest is immedety complied with; then he says that he feels wery happy in his mind and vishes to be left alone; and then he dies, prevously cuttin' his own hair and makin' one flat curl in the wery middle of his forehead."

This anecdote produced an extraordinary effect, not only upon Mr. Slithers, but upon the housekeeper also, who evinced so much anxiety to please and be pleased, that Mr. Weller, with a manner betokening some alarm, conveyed a whispered inquiry to his son whether he had gone "too fur."

"Wot do you mean by too fur?" demanded Sam.

"In that 'ere little compliment respectin' the want of hock'erdness in ladies, Sammy," replied his father.

"You don't think she 's fallen in love with you in consekens o' that, do you?" said Sam.

"More unlikelier things have come to pass, my boy," replied Mr. Weller in a hoarse whisper; "I'm always afeerd of inadwertent captiwation, Sammy. If I know'd how to make myself ugly or unpleasant, I'd do it, Samivel, rayther than live in this here state of perpetival terror!"

Mr. Weller had, at that time, no further opportunity of dwelling upon the apprehensions which beset his mind, for the immediate occasion of his fears proceeded to lead the way down stairs, apologizing as they went for conducting him into the kitchen, which apartment, however, she was induced to proffer for his accommodation in preference to her own little room, the rather as it afforded greater facilities for smoking, and was immediately adjoining the ale-cellar. The preparations which were already made sufficiently proved that these were not mere words of course, for on the deal table were a sturdy ale jug and glasses, flanked with clean pipes and a plentiful supply of tobacco for the old gentleman and his son, while on a dresser hard by was goodly store of cold meat and other eatables. At sight of these arrangements Mr. Weller was at first distracted between his love of joviality and his doubts whether they were not to be considered as so many evidences of captivation having already taken place; but he soon yielded to his natural impulse, and took his seat at the table with a very jolly countenance.

"As to imbibin' any o' this here flagrant veed, mum, in the presence of a lady," said Mr. Weller taking up a pipe and laying it down again, "it could n't be. Samivel, total abstinence, if *you* please."

"But I like it of all things," said the housekeeper.

"No," rejoined Mr. Weller, shaking his head, — "no,"

"Upon my word I do," said the housekeeper. "Mr. Slithers knows I do."

Mr. Weller coughed, and notwithstanding the barber's confirmation of the statement, said "No," again, but more feebly than before. The housekeeper lighted a piece of paper, and insisted on applying it to the bowl of the pipe with her own fair hands; Mr. Weller resisted; the housekeeper cried that her fingers would be burnt; Mr. Weller gave way. The pipe was ignited, Mr. Weller

drew a long puff of smoke, and detecting himself in the very act of smiling on the housekeeper, put a sudden constraint upon his countenance and looked sternly at the candle, with a determination not to captivate, himself, or encourage thoughts of captivation in others. From this iron frame of mind he was roused by the voice of his son.

"I don't think," said Sam, who was smoking with great composure and enjoyment, "that if the lady was agreeable it 'ud be wery far out o' the vay for us four to make up a club of our own like the governors does up stairs, and let him," Sam pointed with the stem of his pipe towards his parent, "be the president."

The housekeeper affably declared that it was the very thing she had been thinking of. The barber said the same. Mr. Weller said nothing, but he laid down his pipe as if in a fit of inspiration, and performed the following manœuvres.

Unbuttoning the three lower buttons of his waistcoat and pausing for a moment to enjoy the easy flow of breath consequent upon this process, he laid violent hands upon his watch-chain and slowly and with extreme difficulty drew from his fob an immense double-cased silver watch, which brought the lining of the pocket with it, and was not to be disentangled but by great exertions and an amazing redness of face. Having fairly got it out at last, he detached the outer case and wound it up with a key of corresponding magnitude; then put the case on again, and having applied the watch to his ear to ascertain that it was still going, gave it some half-dozen hard knocks on the table to improve its performance.

"That," said Mr. Weller, laying it on the table with its face upwards, "is the title and emblem o' this here society. Sammy, reach them two stools this vay for the vacant cheers. Ladies and gen'lmen, Mr. Weller's Watch is vound up and now a goin'. Order!"

By way of enforcing this proclamation, Mr. Weller, using the watch after the manner of a president's hammer, and remarking with great pride that nothing hurt it, and that falls and concussions of all kinds materially enhanced the excellence of the works and assisted the

regulator, knocked the table a great many times, and declared the association formally constituted.

"And don't let 's have no grinnin' at the cheer, Samivel," said Mr. Weller to his son, or I shall be committin' you to the cellar, and then p'r'aps we may get into wot the 'Merrikins call a fix, and the English a qvestion o' privileges."

Having uttered this friendly caution, the President settled himself in his chair with great dignity, and requested that Mr. Samuel would relate an anecdote.

"I 've told one," said Sam.

"Wery good, sir; tell another," returned the chair.

"We wos a talking jist now, sir," said Sam, turning to Slithers, "about barbers. Pursuing that 'ere fruitful theme, sir, I 'll tell you in a wery few words a romantic little story about another barber as p'r'aps you may never have heerd."

"Samivel!" said Mr. Weller, again bringing his watch and the table into smart collision, "address your observations to the cheer, sir, and not to priwate individuals!"

"And if I might rise to order," said the barber, in a soft voice, and looking round him with a conciliatory smile as he leant over the table, with the knuckles of his left hand resting upon it, — "if I *might* rise to order, I would suggest that 'barbers' is not exactly the kind of language which is agreeable and soothing to our feelings. You, sir, will correct me if I 'm wrong, but I believe there *is* such a word in the dictionary as hair-dressers."

"Well, but suppose he was n't a hair-dresser," suggested Sam.

"Wy then, sir, be parliamentary, and call him vun all the more," returned his father. "In the same vay as ev'ry gen'lman in another place is a *honorable*, ev'ry barber in this place is a hair-dresser. Ven you read the speeches in the papers, and see as vun gen'lman says of another, 'the *honorable* member, if he vill allow me to call him so,' you vill understand, sir, that that means, 'if he vill allow me to keep up that 'ere pleasant and universal fiction?'"

It is a common remark, confirmed by history and experience, that great men rise with the circumstances in

which they are placed. Mr. Weller came out so strong in his capacity of chairman, that Sam was for some time prevented from speaking by a grin of surprise, which held his faculties enchained, and at last subsided in a long whistle of a single note. Nay the old gentleman appeared even to have astonished himself, and that to no small extent, as was demonstrated by the vast amount of chuckling in which he indulged, after the utterance of these lucid remarks.

“Here’s the story,” said Sam. “Vunce upon a time there was a young hair-dresser as opened a wery smart little shop vith four wax dummies in the winder, two gen’lmen and two ladies, — the gen’lmen vith blue dots for their beards, wery large viskers, ou-dacious heads of hair, uncommon clear eyes, and nostrils of amazin’ pinkness, — the ladies vith their heads o’ one side, their right forefingers on their lips, and their forms deweloped beautiful, in vich last respect they had the adwantage over the gen’lmen, as was n’t allowed but wery little shoulder, and terminated rayther abrupt, in fancy drapery. He had also a many hair-brushes and tooth-brushes bottled up in the winder, neat glass cases on the counter, a floor-clothed cuttin’-room up stairs, and a weighin’ macheen in the shop, right opposite the door; but the great attraction and ornament wos the dummies, which this here young hair-dresser wos constantly a runnin’ out in the road to look at, and constantly a runnin’ in agin to touch up and polish; in short, he wos so proud on ’em that ven Sunday come, he wos always wretched and mis’rable to think they wos behind the shutters, and looked anxiously for Monday on that account. Vun o’ these dummies wos a fav’rite vith him beyond the others, and ven any of his acquaintance asked him wy he did n’t get married, — as the young ladies he know’d, in partickler, often did, — he used to say, ‘Never! I never vill enter into the bonds of vedlock,’ he says, ‘until I meet vith a young ’ooman as realizes my idea o’ that ’ere fairest dummy vith the light hair. Then and not till then,’ he says, ‘I vill approach the altar!’ All the young ladies he know’d as had got dark hair told him this wos wery sinful and that he wos wurshippin’ a idle, but them as wos at all near the same shade as the dummy colored up wery

much, and was observed to think him a wery nice young man."

"Samivel," said Mr. Weller, gravely; "a member o' this assosiashun bein' one o' that 'ere tender sex which is now immedety referred to, I have to rekvest that you vill make no reflexions."

"I ain't a makin' any, am I?" inquired Sam.

"Order, sir!" rejoined Mr. Weller, with severe dignity; then, sinking the chairman in the father, he added in his usual tone of voice, "Samivel, drive on!"

Sam interchanged a smile with the housekeeper, and proceeded:—

"The young hair-dresser had n't been in the habit o' makin' this awowal above six months, ven he en-coun-tered a young lady as wos the wery picter o' the fairest dummy. 'Now,' he says, 'it's all up. I am a slave!' The young lady wos not only the picter o' the fairest dummy, but she wos wery romantic, as the young hair-dresser wos, too, and he says, 'Oh!' he says, 'here's a community o' feelin', here's a flow o' soul!' he says, 'here's a interchange o' sentiment!' The young lady did n't say much, o' course, but she expressed herself agreeable, and shortly arterwards vent to see him with a mutual friend. The hair-dresser rushes out to meet her, but d'rectly she sees the dummies she changes color and falls a tremblin' wiolently. 'Look up, my love,' says the hair-dresser, 'behold your imige in my winder, but not correcter than in my art!' 'My imige!' she says. 'Yourn!' replies the hair-dresser. 'But whose imige is *that*!' she says, a pinting at vun o' the gen'lmen. 'No vun's, my love,' he says, 'it is but a idea.' 'A idea!' she cries; 'it is a portrait, I feel it is a portrait, and that 'ere noble face must be in the millingtary!' 'Wot do I hear!' says he, a crumplin' his curls. 'William Gibbs,' she says, quite firm, 'never renoo the subject. I respect you as a friend,' she says, 'but my affections is set upon that manly brow.' 'This,' says the hair-dresser, 'is a reg'lar blight, and in it I perceive the hand of Fate. Farevell!' Vith these vords he rushes into the shop, breaks the dummy's nose with a blow of his curlin'-irons, melts him down at the parlor fire, and never smiles arterwards."

"The young lady, Mr. Weller?" said the housekeeper.

"Why, ma'am," said Sam, "finding that Fate had a spite agin her, and everybody she come into contact vith, she never smiled neither, but read a deal o' poetry and pined away, — by rayther slow degrees, for she an't dead yet. It took a deal o' poetry to kill the hair-dresser, and some people say arter all that it was more the gin and water as caused him to be run over; p'r'aps it wos a little o' both, and came o' mixing the two."

The barber declared that Mr. Weller had related one of the most interesting stories that had ever come within his knowledge, in which opinion the housekeeper entirely concurred.

"Are you a married man, sir?" inquired Sam.

The barber replied that he had not that honor.

"I s'pose you mean to be?" said Sam.

"Well," replied the barber, rubbing his hands smirkingly, "I don't know, I don't think it's very likely."

"That's a bad sign," said Sam; "if you'd said you meant to be vun o' these days, I should ha' looked upon you as bein' safe. You're in a verry precarious state."

"I am not conscious of any danger, at all events," returned the barber.

"No more wos I, sir," said the elder Mr. Weller, interposing; "those vere my symptoms, exactly. I've been took that vay twice. Keep your vether eye open, my friend, or you're gone."

There was something so very solemn about this admonition, both in its matter and manner, and also in the way in which Mr. Weller still kept his eye fixed upon the unsuspecting victim, that nobody cared to speak for some little time, and might not have cared to do so for some time longer, if the housekeeper had not happened to sigh, which called off the old gentleman's attention and gave rise to a gallant inquiry whether "there wos anythin' wery piercin' in that 'ere little heart?"

"Dear me, Mr. Weller!" said the housekeeper, laughing.

"No, but is there anythin' as agitates it?" pursued the old gentleman. "Has it always been obderrate, always opposed to the happiness o' human creeturs? Eh? Has it?"

At this critical juncture for her blushes and confusion, the housekeeper discovered that more ale was wanted, and hastily withdrew into the cellar to draw the same, followed by the barber who insisted on carrying the candle. Having looked after her with a very complacent expression of face, and after him with some disdain, Mr. Weller caused his glance to travel slowly round the kitchen until at length it rested on his son.

"Sammy," said Mr. Weller, "I mistrust that barber."

"Wot for?" returned Sam; "wot's he got to do with you? You're a nice man, you are, arter pretendin' all kinds o' terror, to go a payin' compliments and talkin' about hearts and piercers."

The imputation of gallantry appeared to afford Mr. Weller the utmost delight, for he replied in a voice choked by suppressed laughter, and with the tears in his eyes, —

"Wos I a talkin' about hearts and piercers, — wos I though, Sammy, eh?"

"Wos you? of course you wos."

"She don't know no better, Sammy, there an't no harm in it, — no danger, Sammy; she's only a punster. She seemed pleased, though, did n't she? O' course, she wos pleased, it's nat'ral she should be, wery nat'ral."

"He's wain of it!" exclaimed Sam, joining in his father's mirth. "He's actually wain!"

"Hush!" replied Mr. Weller, composing his features, "they're a comin' back, — the little heart's a comin' back. But mark these wurds o' mine once more, and remember 'em ven your father says he said 'em. Samivel, I mistrust that 'ere deceitful barber."

* * * * *

[Old Curiosity Shop is continued to the end of the number.]

MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK.

VI.

MASTER HUMPHREY FROM HIS CLOCK-SIDE IN THE CHIMNEY-CORNER.

Two or three evenings after the institution of Mr. Weller's Watch, I thought I heard, as I walked in the garden, the voice of Mr. Weller himself at no great distance; and stopping once or twice to listen more attentively, I found that the sounds proceeded from my housekeeper's little sitting-room, which is at the back of the house. I took no further notice of the circumstance at that time, but it formed the subject of a conversation between me and my friend Jack Redburn next morning, when I found that I had not been deceived in my impression. Jack furnished me with the following particulars; and as he appeared to take extraordinary pleasure in relating them, I have begged him in future to jot down any such domestic scenes or occurrences that may please his humor, in order that they may be told in his own way. I must confess that, as Mr. Pickwick and he are constantly together, I have been influenced, in making this request, by a secret desire to know something of their proceedings.

On the evening in question, the housekeeper's room was arranged with particular care, and the housekeeper herself was very smartly dressed. The preparations, however, were not confined to mere showy demonstrations, as tea was prepared for three persons, with a small display of preserves and jams and sweet cakes, which heralded some uncommon occasion. Miss Benton (my housekeeper bears that name) was in a state of great expectation, too, frequently going to the front door and

looking anxiously down the lane, and more than once observing to the servant-girl that she expected company, and hoped no accident had happened to delay them.

A modest ring at the bell at length allayed her fears, and Miss Benton, hurrying into her own room and shutting herself up in order that she might preserve that appearance of being taken by surprise which is so essential to the polite reception of visitors, awaited their coming with a smiling countenance.

"Good ev'nin', mum," said the older Mr. Weller, looking in at the door after a prefatory tap. "I 'm afeerd we 've come in rayther arter the time, mum, but the young colt being full o' wice, has been a boltin' and shyin' and gettin' his leg over the traces to sich a extent that if he an't very soon broke in, he 'll wex me into a broken heart, and then he 'll never be brought out no more except to learn his letters from the writin' on his grandfather's tombstone."

With these pathetic words, which were addressed to something outside the door about two feet six from the ground, Mr. Weller introduced a very small boy firmly set upon a couple of very sturdy legs, who looked as if nothing could ever knock him down. Besides having a very round face strongly resembling Mr. Weller's, and a stout little body of exactly his build, this young gentleman, standing with his little legs very wide apart as if the top-boots were familiar to them, actually winked upon the housekeeper with his infant eye, in imitation of his grandfather.

"There 's a naughty boy, mum," said Mr. Weller, bursting with delight, "there 's a immoral Tony. Wos there ever a little chap o' four year and eight months old as vinked his eye at a strange lady afore?"

As little affected by this observation as by the former appeal to his feelings, Master Weller elevated in the air a small model of a coach whip which he carried in his hand, and addressing the housekeeper with a shrill "ya — hip!" inquired if she was "going down the road"; at which happy adaptation of a lesson he had been taught from infancy, Mr. Weller could restrain his feelings no longer, but gave him twopence on the spot.

"It 's in wain to deny it, mum," said Mr. Weller,

"this here is a boy arter his grandfather's own heart, and beats out all the boys as ever wos or will be. Though at the same time, mum," added Mr. Weller, trying to look gravely down upon his favorite, "it was wery wrong on him to want to — over all the posts as we come along, and wery cruel on him to force poor grandfather to lift him cross-legged over every vun of 'em. He would n't pass vun single blessed post, mum, and at the top o' the lane there 's seven-and-forty on 'em all in a row, and wery close together."

Here Mr. Weller, whose feelings were in a perpetual conflict between pride in his grandson's achievements, and a sense of his own responsibility and the importance of impressing him with moral truths, burst into a fit of laughter, and suddenly checking himself, remarked in a severe tone that little boys as made their grandfathers put 'em over posts never went to heaven at any price.

By this time the housekeeper had made tea, and little Tony, placed on a chair beside her, with his eyes nearly on a level with the top of the table, was provided with various delicacies which yielded him extreme contentment. The housekeeper (who seemed rather afraid of the child, notwithstanding her caresses) then patted him on the head and declared that he was the finest boy she had ever seen.

"Wy, mum," said Mr. Weller, "I don't think you 'll see a many sich, and that 's the truth. But if my son Samivel would give me my vay, mum, and only dis-pense vith his — *might* I wenter to say the vurd?"

"What word, Mr. Weller?" said the housekeeper, blushing slightly.

"Petticuts, mum," returned that gentleman, laying his hand upon the garments of his grandson. "If my son Samivel, mum, would only dis-pense vith these here, you 'd see such a alteration in his appearance, as the imagination can't depicter."

"But what would you have the child wear instead, Mr. Weller?" said the housekeeper.

"I 've offered my son Samivei, mum, agen and agen," returned the old gentleman, "to purvide him at my own cost vith a suit o' clothes as 'ud be the makin' on him, and form his mind in infancy for those pursuits as I hope

the family o' the Vellers vill always dewote themselves to. Tony, my boy, tell the lady wot them clothes are, as grandfather says, father ought to let you wear."

"A little white hat and a little sprig weskut and little knee cords and little top-boots and a little green coat with little bright buttons and a little welwet collar," replied Tony, with great readiness and no stops.

"That 's the cos-toom, mum," said Mr. Weller, looking proudly at the housekeeper. "Once make sich a model on him as that, and you 'd say he *wos* a angel!"

Perhaps the housekeeper thought that in such a guise young Tony would look more like the angel at Islington than anything else of that name, or perhaps she was disconcerted to find her previously conceived ideas disturbed, as angels are not commonly represented in top-boots and sprig waistcoats. She coughed doubtfully, but said nothing.

"How many brothers and sisters have you, my dear?" she asked, after a short silence.

"One brother and no sister at all," replied Tony. "Sam his name is, and so 's my father's. Do you know my father?"

"O yes, I know him," said the housekeeper, graciously.

"Is my father fond of you?" pursued Tony.

"I hope so," rejoined the smiling housekeeper.

Tony considered a moment, and then said, "Is my grandfather fond of you?"

This would seem a very easy question to answer, but instead of replying to it, the housekeeper smiled in great confusion, and said that really children did ask such extraordinary questions that it was the most difficult thing in the world to talk to them. Mr. Weller took upon himself to reply that he was very fond of the lady; but the housekeeper entreating that he would not put such things into the child's head, Mr. Weller shook his own while she looked another way, and seemed to be troubled with a misgiving that captivation was in progress. It was, perhaps, on this account that he changed the subject precipitately.

"It 's wery wrong in little boys to make game o' their grandfathers, an't it, mum?" said Mr. Weller, shaking

his head waggishly, until Tony looked at him, when he counterfeited the deepest dejection and sorrow.

"O, very sad!" assented the housekeeper. "But I hope no little boys do that?"

"There is vun young Turk, mum," said Mr. Weller, "as havin' seen his grandfather a little overcome with drink on the occasion of a friend's birthday, goes a reel-in' and staggerin' about the house, and makin' believe that he's the old gen'lm'n."

"O, quite shocking!" cried the housekeeper.

"Yes, mum," said Mr. Weller, "and previously to so doin', this here young traitor that I'm a speakin' of, pinches his little nose to make it red, and then he gives a hiccup and says, 'I'm all right,' he says, 'give us another song!' Ha, Ha! 'Give us another song,' he says. Ha, ha, ha!"

In his excessive delight, Mr. Weller was quite unmindful of his moral responsibility, until little Tony kicked up his legs, and laughing immoderately, cried, "That was me, that was"; whereupon the grandfather, by a great effort, became extremely solemn.

"No, Tony, not you," said Mr. Weller. "I hope it warn't you, Tony. It must ha' been that 'ere naughty little chap as comes sometimes out o' the empty watch-box round the corner, — that same little chap as was found standing on the table afore the looking-glass, pretending to shave himself with a oyster-knife."

"He did n't hurt himself, I hope?" observed the housekeeper.

"Not he, mum, said Mr. Weller, proudly; "bless your heart, you might trust that 'ere boy with a steam-engine a'most, he's such a knowin' young" — but suddenly recollecting himself and observing that Tony perfectly understood and appreciated the compliment, the old gentleman groaned and observed that "it wos all wery shockin' — wery."

"O, he's a bad 'un," said Mr. Weller, "is that 'ere watch-box boy, makin' such a noise and litter in the back yard, he does, waterin' wooden horses and feedin' of 'em with grass, and perpetivally spillin' his little brother out of a veelbarrow and frightenin' his mother out of her wits, at the wery moment wen she's expectin' to in-

crease his stock of happiness with another play-feller, — O, he's a bad one ! He's even gone so far as to put on a pair o' paper spectacles as he got his father to make for him, and walk up and down the garden with his hands behind him in imitation of Mr. Pickwick, — but Tony don't do sich things, O no ! ”

“ O no ! ” echoed Tony.

“ He knows better, he does,” said Mr. Weller. “ He knows that if he wos to come sich games as these nobody would n't love him, and that his grandfather in partickler could n't abear the sight on him ; for vich reasons Tony's always good.”

“ Always good,” echoed Tony ; and his grandfather immediately took him on his knee and kissed him, at the same time, with many nods and winks, slyly pointing at the child's head with his thumb, in order that the housekeeper, otherwise deceived by the admirable manner in which he (Mr. Weller) had sustained his character, might not suppose that any other young gentleman was referred to, and might clearly understand that the boy of the watch-box was but an imaginary creation, and a fetch of Tony himself, invented for his improvement and reformation.

Not confining himself to a mere verbal description of his grandson's abilities, Mr. Weller, when tea was finished, invited him by various gifts of pence and half-pence to smoke imaginary pipes, drink visionary beer from real pots, imitate his grandfather without reserve, and in particular to go through the drunken scene, which threw the old gentleman into ecstasies and filled the housekeeper with wonder. Nor was Mr. Weller's pride satisfied with even this display, for when he took his leave he carried the child, like some rare and astonishing curiosity, first to the barber's house and afterwards to the tobacconist's, at each of which places he repeated his performances with the utmost effect to applauding and delighted audiences. It was half past nine o'clock when Mr. Weller was last seen carrying him home upon his shoulder, and it has been whispered abroad that at that time the infant Tony was rather intoxicated.*

* Old Curiosity Shop is continued from here to the end without further break.

[Master Humphrey is revived thus at the close of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, merely to introduce Barnaby Rudge.]

I was musing the other evening upon the characters and incidents with which I had been so long engaged; wondering how I could ever have looked forward with pleasure to the completion of my tale, and reproaching myself for having done so, as if it were a kind of cruelty to those companions of my solitude whom I had now dismissed, and could never again recall; when my clock struck ten. Punctual to the hour, my friends appeared.

On our last night of meeting, we had finished the story which the reader has just concluded. Our conversation took the same current as the meditations which the entrance of my friends had interrupted, and *The Old Curiosity Shop* was the staple of our discourse.

I may confide to the reader now, that in connection with this little history I had something upon my mind; something to communicate which I had all along with difficulty repressed; something I had deemed it, during the progress of the story, necessary to its interest to disguise, and which, now that it was over, I wished, and was yet reluctant to disclose.

To conceal anything from those to whom I am attached, is not in my nature. I can never close my lips where I have opened my heart. This temper, and the consciousness of having done some violence to it in my narrative, laid me under a restraint which I should have had great difficulty in overcoming, but for a timely remark from Mr. Miles, who, as I hinted in a former paper, is a gentleman of business habits, and of great exactness and propriety in all his transactions.

"I could have wished," my friend objected, "that we had been made acquainted with the single gentleman's name. I don't like his withholding his name. It made me look upon him at first with suspicion, and caused me to doubt his moral character, I assure you. I am fully satisfied by this time of his being a worthy creature, but in this respect he certainly would not appear to have acted at all like a man of business."

"My friends," said I, drawing to the table, at which they were by this time seated in their usual chairs, "do

you remember that this story bore another title besides that one we have so often heard of late ? ”

Mr. Miles had his pocket-book out in an instant, and referring to an entry therein, rejoined, “ Certainly. Personal Adventures of Master Humphrey. Here it is. I made a note of it at the time.”

I was about to resume what I had to tell them, when the same Mr. Miles again interrupted me, observing that the narrative originated in a personal adventure of my own, and that was no doubt the reason for its being thus designated.

This led me to the point at once.

“ You will one and all forgive me,” I returned, “ if, for the greater convenience of the story, and for its better introduction, that adventure was fictitious. I had my share, indeed, — no light or trivial one, — in the pages we have read, but it was not the share I feigned to have at first. The younger brother, the single gentleman, the nameless actor in this little drama, stands before you now.”

It was easy to see they had not expected this disclosure.

“ Yes,” I pursued. “ I can look back upon my part in it with a calm, half-smiling pity for myself as for some other man. But I am he, indeed ; and now the chief sorrows of my life are yours.”

I need not say what true gratification I derived from the sympathy and kindness with which this acknowledgment was received ; nor how often it had risen to my lips before ; nor how difficult I had found it — how impossible, when I came to those passages which touched me most, and most nearly concerned me — to sustain the character I had assumed. It is enough to say that I replaced in the clock-case the record of so many trials, — sorrowfully, it is true, but with a softened sorrow which was almost pleasure ; and felt that in living through the past again, and communicating to others the lesson it had helped to teach me, I had been a happier man.

We lingered so long over the leaves from which I had read, that as I consigned them to their former resting-place, the hand of my trusty clock pointed to twelve, and there came towards us upon the wind the voice of the

deep and distant bell of St. Paul's as it struck the hour of midnight.

"This," said I, returning with a manuscript I had taken, at the moment, from the same repository, "to be opened to such music, should be a tale where London's face by night is darkly seen, and where some deed of such a time as this is dimly shadowed out. Which of us here has seen the working of that great machine whose voice has just now ceased?"

Mr. Pickwick had, of course, and so had Mr. Miles. Jack and my deaf friend were in the minority.

I had seen it but a few days before, and could not help telling them of the fancy I had had about it.

I paid my fee of twopence upon entering, to one of the money-changers who sit within the Temple; and falling, after a few turns up and down, into the quiet train of thought which such a place awakens, paced the echoing stones like some old monk whose present world lay all within its walls. As I looked afar up into the lofty dome, I could not help wondering what were his reflections whose genius reared that mighty pile, when, the last small wedge of timber fixed, the last nail driven into its home for many centuries, the clang of hammers, and the hum of busy voices gone, and the Great Silence whole years of noise had helped to make, reigning undisturbed around, he mused, as I did now, upon his work, and lost himself amid its vast extent. I could not quite determine whether the contemplation of it would impress him with a sense of greatness or of insignificance; but when I remembered how long a time it had taken to erect, in how short a space it might be traversed even to its remotest parts, for how brief a term he, or any of those who cared to bear his name, would live to see it or know of its existence, I imagined him far more melancholy than proud, and looking with regret upon his labor done. With these thoughts in my mind, I began to ascend, almost unconsciously, the flight of steps leading to the several wonders of the building, and found myself before a barrier where another money-taker sat, who demanded which among them I would choose to see. There were the stone-gallery, he said, and the whispering-gallery, the geometrical staircase, the room of models, the

clock — the clock being quite in my way, I stopped him there, and chose that sight from all the rest.

I groped my way into the Turret which it occupies, and saw before me, in a kind of loft, what seemed to be a great, old oaken press with folding doors. These, being thrown back by the attendant (who was sleeping when I came upon him, and looked a drowsy fellow, as though his close companionship with Time had made him quite indifferent to it), disclosed a complicated crowd of wheels and chains in iron and brass, — great, sturdy, rattling engines, — suggestive of breaking a finger put in here or there, and grinding the bone to powder, — and these were the Clock! Its very pulse, if I may use the word, was like no other clock. It did not mark the flight of every moment with a gentle second stroke, as though it would check old Time, and have him stay his pace in pity, but measured it with one sledge-hammer beat, as if its business were to crush the seconds as they came trooping on, and remorselessly to clear a path before the Day of Judgment.

I sat down opposite to it, and hearing its regular and never-changing voice, that one deep constant note, uppermost amongst all the noise and clatter in the streets below, — marking that, let that tumult rise or fall, go on or stop, — let it be night or noon, to-morrow or to-day, this year or next, — it still performed its functions with the same dull constancy, and regulated the progress of the life around, the fancy came upon me that this was London's Heart, and that when it should cease to beat, the City would be no more.

It is night. Calm and unmoved amidst the scenes that darkness favors, the great heart of London throbs in its Giant breast. Wealth and beggary, vice and virtue, guilt and innocence, repletion and the direst hunger, all treading on each other and crowding together, are gathered round it. Draw but a little circle above the clustering house-tops, and you shall have within its space everything, with its opposite extreme and contradiction, close beside. Where yonder feeble light is shining, a man is but this moment dead. The taper at a few yards' distance is seen by eyes that have this instant opened on the world. There are two houses separated by but an

inch or two of wall. In one, there are quiet minds at rest; in the other, a waking conscience that one might think would trouble the very air. In that close corner where the roofs shrink down and cower together as if to hide their secrets from the handsome street hard by, there are such dark crimes, such miseries and horrors, as could be hardly told in whispers. In the handsome street, there are folks asleep who have dwelt there all their lives, and have no more knowledge of these things than if they had never been, or were transacted at the remotest limits of the world, — who, if they were hinted at, would shake their heads, look wise, and frown, and say they were impossible, and out of Nature, — as if all great towns were not. Does not this Heart of London, that nothing moves, nor stops, nor quickens, — that goes on the same let what will be done, — does it not express the city's character well !

The day begins to break, and soon there is the hum and noise of life. Those who have spent the night on doorsteps and cold stones crawl off to beg; they who have slept in beds come forth to their occupation, too, and business is astir. The fog of sleep rolls slowly off, and London shines awake. The streets are filled with carriages, and people gayly clad. The jails are full, too, to the throat, nor have the workhouses or hospitals much room to spare. The courts of law are crowded. Taverns have their regular frequenters by this time, and every mart of traffic has its throng. Each of these places is a world, and has its own inhabitants; each is distinct from, and almost unconscious of the existence of any other. There are some few people well to do, who remember to have heard it said, that numbers of men and women — thousands, they think it was — get up in London every day, unknowing where to lay their heads at night; and that there are quarters of the town where misery and famine always are. They don't believe it quite, — there may be some truth in it, but it is exaggerated, of course. So, each of these thousand worlds goes on, intent upon itself, until night comes again, — first with its lights and pleasures, and its cheerful streets; then with its guilt and darkness.

Heart of London, there is a moral in thy every stroke !

as I look on at thy indomitable working, which neither death, nor press of life, nor grief, nor gladness out of doors will influence one jot, I seem to hear a voice within thee which sinks into my heart, bidding me, as I elbow my way among the crowd, have some thought for the meanest wretch that passes, and, being a man, to turn away with scorn and pride from none that bear the human shape.

I am by no means sure that I might not have been tempted to enlarge upon the subject, had not the papers that lay before me on the table been a silent reproach for even this digression. I took them up again when I had got thus far, and seriously prepared to read.

The handwriting was strange to me, for the manuscript had been fairly copied. As it is against our rules, in such a case, to inquire into the authorship until the reading is concluded, I could only glance at the different faces round me, in search of some expression which should betray the writer. Whoever he might be, he was prepared for this, and gave no sign for my enlightenment.

I had the papers in my hand, when my deaf friend interposed with a suggestion.

"It has occurred to me," he said, "bearing in mind your sequel to the tale we have finished, that if such of us as have anything to relate of our own lives could interweave it with our contribution to the Clock, it would be well to do so. This need be no restraint upon us, either as to time, or place, or incident, since any real passage of this kind may be surrounded by fictitious circumstances, and represented by fictitious characters. What if we make this an article of agreement among ourselves?"

The proposition was cordially received, but the difficulty appeared to be that here was a long story written before we had thought of it.

"Unless," said I, "it should have happened that the writer of this tale, — which is not impossible, for men are apt to do so when they write, — has actually mingled with it something of his own endurance and experience."

Nobody spoke, but I thought I detected in one quarter that this was really the case.

"If I have no assurance to the contrary," I added, therefore, "I shall take it for granted that he has done so, and that even these papers come within our new agreement. Everybody being mute, we hold that understanding, if you please."

And here I was about to begin again, when Jack informed us softly, that during the progress of our last narrative, Mr. Weller's Watch had adjourned its sittings from the kitchen, and regularly met outside our door, where he had no doubt that august body would be found at the present moment. As this was for the convenience of listening to our stories, he submitted that they might be suffered to come in, and hear them more pleasantly.

To this we one and all yielded a ready assent, and the party being discovered, as Jack had supposed, and invited to walk in, entered (though not without great confusion at having been detected), and were accommodated with chairs at a little distance.

Then, the lamp being trimmed, the fire well stirred and burning brightly, the hearth clean swept, the curtains closely drawn, the clock wound up, we entered on our new story, — BARNABY RUDGE.

* * * * *

[This is, as indicated, the final appearance of Master Humphrey's Clock. It forms the conclusion of Barnaby Rudge.]

It is again midnight. My fire burns cheerfully; the room is filled with my old friend's sober voice; and I am left to muse upon the story we have just now finished.

It makes me smile, at such a time as this, to think if there were any one to see me sitting in my easy-chair, my gray head hanging down, my eyes bent thoughtfully upon the glowing embers, and my crutch — emblem of my helplessness — lying upon the hearth at my feet, how solitary I should seem. Yet though I am the sole tenant of this chimney-corner, though I am childless and old, I have no sense of loneliness at this hour; but am the centre of a silent group whose company I love.

Thus, even age and weakness have their consolations. If I were a younger man, if I were more active, more strongly bound and tied to life, these visionary friends would shun me, or I should desire to fly from them. Being what I am, I can court their society, and delight in it; and pass whole hours in picturing to myself the shadows that perchance flock every night into this chamber, and in imagining with pleasure what kind of interest they have in the frail, feeble mortal, who is its sole inhabitant.

All the friends I have ever lost I find again among these visitors. I love to fancy their spirits hovering about me, feeling still some earthly kindness for their old companion, and watching his decay. "He is weaker, he declines apace, he draws nearer and nearer to us, and will soon be conscious of our existence." What is there to alarm me in this? It is encouragement and hope.

These thoughts have never crowded on me half so fast as they have done to-night. Faces I had long forgotten have become familiar to me once again; traits I had endeavored to recall for years have come before me in an instant; nothing is changed but me; and even I can be my former self at will.

Raising my eyes but now to the face of my old clock, I remember, quite involuntarily, the veneration, not unmixed with a sort of childish awe, with which I used to sit and watch it as it ticked unheeded in a dark staircase corner. I recollect looking more grave and steady when I met its dusty face, as if, having that strange kind of life within it, and being free from all excess of vulgar appetite, and warning all the house by night and day, it were a sage. How often have I listened to it as it told the beads of time, and wondered at its constancy! How often watched it slowly pointing round the dial, and, while I panted for the eagerly expected hour to come, admired, despite myself, its steadiness of purpose and lofty freedom from all human strife, impatience, and desire!

I thought it cruel once. It was very hard of heart, to my mind, I remember. It was an old servant even then; and I felt as though it ought to show some sorrow; as though it wanted sympathy with us in our distress, and were a dull, heartless, mercenary creature. Ah! how

soon I learnt to know that in its ceaseless going on, and in its being checked or stayed by nothing, lay its greatest kindness, and the only balm for grief and wounded peace of mind !

To-night, to-night, when this tranquillity and calm are on my spirits, and memory presents so many shifting scenes before me, I take my quiet stand at will by many a fire that has been long extinguished, and mingle with the cheerful group that cluster round it. If I could be sorrowful in such a mood, I should grow sad to think what a poor blot I was upon their youth and beauty once, and now how few remain to put me to the blush ; I should grow sad to think that such among them as I sometimes meet with in my daily walks are scarcely less infirm than I ; that time has brought us to a level ; and that all distinctions fade and vanish as we take our trembling steps towards the grave.

But memory was given us for better purposes than this, and mine is not a torment, but a source of pleasure. To muse upon the gayety and youth I have known suggests to me glad scenes of harmless mirth that may be passing now. From contemplating them apart, I soon become an actor in these little dramas ; and humoring my fancy, lose myself among the beings it invokes.

When my fire is bright and high, and a warm blush mantles in the walls and ceiling of this ancient room ; when my clock makes cheerful music, like one of those chirping insects who delight in the warm hearth, and are sometimes, by a good superstition, looked upon as the harbingers of fortune and plenty to that household in whose mercies they put their humble trust ; when everything is in a ruddy, genial glow, and there are voices in the crackling flame, and smiles in its flashing light ; other smiles and other voices congregate around me, invading, with their pleasant harmony, the silence of the time.

For then a knot of youthful creatures gather round my fireside, and the room re-echoes to their merry voices. My solitary chair no longer holds its ample place before the fire, but is wheeled into a smaller corner, to leave more room for the broad circle formed about the cheerful hearth. I have sons, and daughters, and grandchildren ;

and we are assembled on some occasion of rejoicing common to us all. It is a birthday, perhaps, or perhaps it may be Christmas time ; but be it what it may, there is rare holiday among us ; we are full of glee.

In the chimney-corner, opposite myself, sits one who has grown old beside me. She is changed, of course ; much changed ; and yet I recognize the girl even in that gray hair and wrinkled brow. Glancing from the laughing child who half hides in her ample skirts, and half peeps out, — and from her to the little matron of twelve years old, who sits so womanly and so demure at no great distance from me, — and from her again, to a fair girl in the full bloom of early womanhood, the centre of the group, who has glanced more than once towards the opening door, and by whom the children, whispering and tittering among themselves, *will* leave a vacant chair, although she bids them not, — I see her image thrice repeated, and feel how long it is before one form and set of features wholly pass away, if ever, from among the living. While I am dwelling upon this, and tracing out the gradual change from infancy to youth, from youth to perfect growth, from that to age ; and thinking, with an old man's pride, that she is comely yet ; I feel a slight, thin hand upon my arm, and, looking down, see seated at my feet a crippled boy, — a gentle, patient child, — whose aspect I know well. He rests upon a little crutch, — I know it too, — and leaning on it as he climbs my footstool, whispers in my ear, "I am hardly one of these, dear grandfather, although I love them dearly. They are very kind to me, but you will be kinder still, I know."

I have my hand upon his neck, and stoop to kiss him, when my clock strikes, my chair is in its old spot, and I am alone.

What if I be ? What if this fireside be tenantless, save for the presence of one weak old man ! From my house-top I can look upon a hundred homes, in every one of which these social companions are matters of reality. In my daily walks I pass a thousand men whose cares are all forgotten, whose labors are made light, whose dull routine of work from day to day is cheered and brightened by their glimpses of domestic joy at home. Amid the struggles of this struggling town what cheerful sacri-

fices are made ; what toil endured with readiness ; what patience shown and fortitude displayed for the mere sake of home and its affections ! Let me thank Heaven that I can people my fireside with shadows such as these ; with shadows of bright objects that exist in crowds about me ; and let me say, "I am alone no more."

I never was less so — I write it with a grateful heart — than I am to-night. Recollections of the past and visions of the present come to bear me company ; the meanest man to whom I have ever given alms appears, to add his mite of peace and comfort to my stock ; and whenever the fire within me shall grow cold, to light my path upon this earth no more, I pray that it may be at such an hour as this, and when I love the world as well as I do now.

THE DEAF GENTLEMAN FROM HIS OWN APARTMENT.

Our dear friend laid down his pen at the end of the foregoing paragraph, to take it up no more. I little thought ever to employ mine upon so sorrowful a task as that which he has left me, and to which I now devote it.

As he did not appear among us at his usual hour next morning, we knocked gently at his door. No answer being given, it was softly opened ; and then, to our surprise, we saw him seated before the ashes of his fire, with a little table I was accustomed to set at his elbow when I left him for the night, at a short distance from him, as though he had pushed it away with the idea of rising and retiring to his bed. His crutch and footstool lay at his feet as usual, and he was dressed in his chamber-gown, which he had put on before I left him. He was reclining in his chair, in his accustomed posture, with his face towards the fire, and seemed absorbed in meditation, — indeed, at first, we almost hoped he was.

Going up to him, we found him dead. I have often, very often, seen him sleeping, and always peacefully, but I never saw him look so calm and tranquil. His face wore a serene, benign expression, which had impressed me very strongly when we last shook hands ; not that he had ever any other look, God knows ; but there was something in this so very spiritual, so strangely and in-

definably allied to youth, although his head was gray and venerable, that it was new even in him. It came upon me all at once when on some slight pretence he called me back upon the previous night to take me by the hand again, and once more say, "God bless you."

A bell-rope hung within his reach, but he had not moved towards it, nor had he stirred, we all agreed, except, as I have said, to push away his table, which he could have done, and no doubt did, with a very slight motion of his hand. He had relapsed for a moment into his late train of meditation, and, with a thoughtful smile upon his face, had died.

I had long known it to be his wish that whenever this event should come to pass we might be all assembled in the house. I therefore lost no time in sending for Mr. Pickwick and for Mr. Miles, both of whom arrived before the messenger's return.

It is not my purpose to dilate upon the sorrow and affectionate emotions of which I was at once the witness and the sharer. But I may say, of the humbler mourners, that his faithful housekeeper was fairly heart-broken; that the poor barber would not be comforted; and that I shall respect the homely truth and warmth of heart of Mr. Weller and his son to the last moment of my life.

"And the sweet old creetur, sir," said the elder Mr. Weller to me in the afternoon, "has bolted. Him as had no wice, and was so free from temper that a infant might ha' drove him, has been took at last with that 'ere unavoidable fit o' staggers as we all must come to, and gone off his feed forever! I see him," said the old gentleman, with a moisture in his eye, which could not be mistaken, — "I see him gettin', every journey, more and more groggy; I says to Samivel, 'My boy! the Grey's a goin' at the knees'; and now my predilictions is fatally werified, and him as I could never do enough to serve or show my likin' for, is up the great uniwersal spout o' natur."

I was not the less sensible of the old man's attachment because he expressed it in his peculiar manner. Indeed, I can truly assert of both him and his son, that notwithstanding the extraordinary dialogues, they held together, and the strange commentaries and corrections with which each of them illustrated the other's speech, I do not think

it possible to exceed the sincerity of their regret ; and that I am sure their thoughtfulness and anxiety in anticipating the discharge of many little offices of sympathy would have done honor to the most delicate-minded persons.

Our friend had frequently told us that his will would be found in a box in the Clock-case, the key of which was in his writing-desk. As he had told us also that he desired it to be opened immediately after his death, whenever that should happen, we met together that night for the fulfilment of his request.

We found it where he had told us, wrapped in a sealed paper, and with it a codicil of recent date, in which he named Mr. Miles and Mr. Pickwick his executors, — as having no need of any greater benefit from his estate than a generous token (which he bequeathed to them) of his friendship and remembrance.

After pointing out the spot in which he wished his ashes to repose, he gave to "his dear old friends," Jack Redburn and myself, his house, his books, his furniture, — in short, all that his house contained ; and with this legacy more ample means of maintaining it in its present state than we, with our habits and at our terms of life, can ever exhaust. Besides these gifts, he left to us, in trust, an annual sum of no insignificant amount, to be distributed in charity among his accustomed pensioners — they are a long list — and such other claimants on his bounty as might, from time to time, present themselves. And as true charity not only covers a multitude of sins, but includes a multitude of virtues, such as forgiveness, liberal construction, gentleness and mercy to the faults of others, and the remembrance of our own imperfections and advantages, he bade us not inquire too closely into the venial errors of the poor, but finding that they *were* poor, first to relieve and then endeavor — at an advantage — to reclaim them.

To the housekeeper he left an annuity, sufficient for her comfortable maintenance and support through life. For the barber, who had attended him many years, he made a similar provision. And I may make two remarks in this place : first, that I think this pair are very likely to club their means together and make a match of

it; and secondly, that I think my friend had this result in his mind, for I have heard him say, more than once, that he could not concur with the generality of mankind in censuring equal marriages made in later life, since there were many cases in which such unions could not fail to be a wise and rational source of happiness to both parties.

The elder Mr. Weller is so far from viewing this prospect with any feelings of jealousy, that he appears to be very much relieved by its contemplation; and his son, if I am not mistaken, participates in this feeling. We are all of opinion, however, that the old gentleman's danger, even at its crisis, was very slight, and that he merely labored under one of those transitory weaknesses to which persons of his temperament are now and then liable, and which become less and less alarming at every return, until they wholly subside. I have no doubt he will remain a jolly old widower for the rest of his life, as he has already inquired of me, with much gravity, whether a writ of habeas corpus would enable him to settle his property upon Tony beyond the possibility of recall; and has, in my presence, conjured his son, with tears in his eyes, that in the event of his ever becoming amorous again, he will put him in a strait-waistcoat until the fit is passed, and distinctly inform the lady that his property is "made over."

Although I have very little doubt that Sam would dutifully comply with these injunctions in a case of extreme necessity, and that he would do so with perfect composure and coolness, I do not apprehend things will ever come to that pass, as the old gentleman seems perfectly happy in the society of his son, his pretty daughter-in-law, and his grandchildren, and has solemnly announced his determination to "take arter the old un in all respects"; from which I infer that it is his intention to regulate his conduct by the model of Mr. Pickwick, who will certainly set him the example of a single life.

I have diverged for a moment from the subject with which I set out, for I know that my friend was interested in these little matters, and I have a natural tendency to linger upon any topic that occupied his thoughts or gave him pleasure and amusement. His remaining wishes

are very briefly told. He desired that we would make him the frequent subject of our conversation ; at the same time, that we would never speak of him with an air of gloom or restraint, but frankly, and as one whom we still loved and hoped to meet again. He trusted that the old house would wear no aspect of mourning, but that it would be lively and cheerful ; and that we would not remove or cover up his picture, which hangs in our dining-room, but make it our companion as he had been. His own room, our place of meeting, remains, at his desire, in its accustomed state ; our seats are placed about the table as of old ; his easy-chair, his desk, his crutch, his footstool, hold their accustomed places, and the clock stands in its familiar corner. We go into the chamber at stated times to see that all is as it should be, and to take care that the light and air are not shut out, for on that point he expressed a strong solicitude. But it was his fancy that the apartment should not be inhabited ; that it should be religiously preserved in this condition, and that the voice of his old companion should be heard no more.

My own history may be summed up in very few words ; and even those I should have spared the reader but for my friend's allusion to me some time since. I have no deeper sorrow than the loss of a child, — an only daughter, who is living, and who fled from her father's house but a few weeks before our friend and I first met. I had never spoken of this even to him, because I have always loved her, and I could not bear to tell him of her error until I could tell him also of her sorrow and regret. Happily I was enabled to do so some time ago. And it will not be long, with Heaven's leave, before she is restored to me ; before I find in her and her husband the support of my declining years.

For my pipe, it is an old relic of home, a thing of no great worth, a poor trifle, but sacred to me for her sake.

Thus, since the death of our venerable friend, Jack Redburn and I have been the sole tenants of the old house ; and, day by day, have lounged together in his favorite walks. Mindful of his injunctions, we have long been able to speak of him with ease and cheerfulness, and to remember him as he would be remembered.

From certain allusions which Jack has dropped, to his having been deserted and cast off in early life, I am inclined to believe that some passages of his youth may possibly be shadowed out in the history of Mr. Chester and his son, but seeing that he avoids the subject, I have not pursued it.

My task is done. The chamber in which we have whiled away so many hours, not, I hope, without some pleasure and some profit, is deserted ; our happy hour of meeting strikes no more ; the chimney-corner has grown cold ; and MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK has stopped forever.

HUNTED DOWN.

I.

Most of us see some romances in life. In my capacity as Chief Manager of a Life Assurance Office, I think I have within the last thirty years seen more romances than the generality of men, however unpromising the opportunity may, at first sight, seem.

As I have retired, and live at my ease, I possess the means that I used to want, of considering what I have seen, at leisure. My experiences have a more remarkable aspect, so reviewed, than they had when they were in progress. I have come home from the Play now, and can recall the scenes of the Drama upon which the curtain has fallen, free from the glare, bewilderment, and bustle, of the Theatre.

Let me recall one of these Romances of the real world.

There is nothing truer than physiognomy, taken in connection with manner. The art of reading that book of which Eternal Wisdom obliges every human creature to present his or her own page with the individual character written on it, is a difficult one, perhaps, and is little studied. It may require some natural aptitude, and it must require (for everything does) some patience and some pains. That these are not usually given to it,—that numbers of people accept a few stock commonplace expressions of face as the whole list of characteristics, and neither seek nor know the refinements that are truest,—that You, for instance, give a great deal of time and attention to the reading of music, Greek, Latin, French, Italian, Hebrew if you please, and do not qualify yourself to read the face of the master or mistress looking over your shoulder teaching it to you,—I assume to be

five hundred times more probable than improbable. Perhaps a little self-sufficiency may be at the bottom of this ; facial expression requires no study from you, you think ; it comes by nature to you to know enough about it, and you are not to be taken in.

I confess, for my part, that I *have* been taken in, over and over and over again. I have been taken in by acquaintances, and I have been taken in (of course) by friends ; far oftener by friends than by any other class of persons. How came I to be so deceived ? Had I quite misread their faces ?

No. Believe me, my first impression of those people, founded on face and manner alone, was invariably true. My mistake was in suffering them to come nearer to me and explain themselves away.

II.

THE partition which separated my own office from our general outer office in the City was of thick plate-glass. I could see through it what passed in the outer office, without hearing a word. I had it put up, in place of a wall that had been there for years, — ever since the house was built. It is no matter whether I did or did not make the change in order that I might derive my first impression of strangers, who came to us on business, from their faces alone, without being influenced by anything they said. Enough to mention that I turned my glass partition to that account, and that a Life Assurance Office is at all times exposed to be practised upon by the most crafty and cruel of the human race.

It was through my glass partition that I first saw the gentleman whose story I am going to tell.

He had come in without my observing it, and had put his hat and umbrella on the broad counter, and was bending over it to take some papers from one of the clerks. He was about forty or so, dark, exceedingly well dressed in black, — being in mourning, — and the hand he extended with a polite air had a particularly well-fitting, black kid glove upon it. His hair, which was elaborately brushed and oiled, was parted straight up the middle; and he presented this parting to the clerk, exactly (to my thinking) as if he had said, in so many words: "You must take me, if you please, my friend, just as I show myself. Come straight up here, follow the gravel path, keep off the grass, I allow no trespassing."

I conceived a very great aversion to that man the moment I thus saw him.

He had asked for some of our printed forms, and the clerk was giving them to him and explaining them. An obliged and agreeable smile was on his face, and his eyes met those of the clerk with a sprightly look. (I have

known a vast quantity of nonsense talked about bad men not looking you in the face. Don't trust that conventional idea. Dishonesty will stare honesty out of countenance, any day in the week, if there is anything to be got by it.)

I saw, in the corner of his eyelash, that he became aware of my looking at him. Immediately he turned the parting in his hair toward the glass partition, as if he said to me with a sweet smile, "Straight up here, if you please. Off the grass!"

In a few moments he had put on his hat and taken up his umbrella, and was gone.

I beckoned the clerk into my room, and asked, "Who was that?"

He had the gentleman's card in his hand. "Mr. Julius Slinkton, Middle Temple."

"A barrister, Mr. Adams?"

"I think not, sir."

"I should have thought him a clergyman, but for his having no Reverend here," said I.

"Probably, from his appearance," Mr. Adams replied, "he is reading for orders."

I should mention that he wore a dainty white cravat, and dainty linen altogether.

"What did he want, Mr. Adams?"

"Merely a form of proposal, sir, and form of reference."

"Recommended here? Did he say?"

"Yes, he said he was recommended here by a friend of yours. He noticed you, but said that as he had not the pleasure of your personal acquaintance he would not trouble you."

"Did he know my name?"

"O yes, sir! He said, 'There is Mr. Sampson, I see!'"

"A well-spoken gentleman, apparently?"

"Remarkably so, sir."

"Insinuating manners, apparently?"

"Very much so, indeed, sir."

"Hah!" said I. "I want nothing at present, Mr. Adams."

Within a fortnight of that day I went to dine with a

friend of mine, a merchant, a man of taste who buys pictures and books ; and the first man I saw among the company was Mr. Julius Slinkton. There he was, standing before the fire, with good large eyes and an open expression of face ; but still (I thought) requiring everybody to come at him by the prepared way he offered, and by no other.

I noticed him ask my friend to introduce him to Mr. Sampson, and my friend did so. Mr. Slinkton was very happy to see me. Not too happy ; there was no overdoing of the matter ; happy in a thoroughly well-bred, perfectly unmeaning way.

"I thought you had met," our host observed.

"No," said Mr. Slinkton. "I did look in at Mr. Sampson's office, on your recommendation ; but I really did not feel justified in troubling Mr. Sampson himself, on a point in the everyday routine of an ordinary clerk."

I said I should have been glad to show him any attention on our friend's introduction.

"I am sure of that," said he, "and am much obliged. At another time, perhaps, I may be less delicate. Only, however, if I have real business ; for I know, Mr. Sampson, how precious business time is, and what a vast number of impertinent people there are in the world."

I acknowledged his consideration with a slight bow. "You were thinking," said I, "of effecting a policy on your life."

"O dear, no ! I am afraid I am not so prudent as you pay me the compliment of supposing me to be, Mr. Sampson. I merely inquired for a friend. But you know what friends are in such matters. Nothing may ever come of it. I have the greatest reluctance to trouble men of business with inquiries for friends, knowing the probabilities to be a thousand to one that the friends will never follow them up. People are so fickle, so selfish, so inconsiderate. Don't you, in your business, find them so every day, Mr. Sampson ?"

I was going to give a qualified answer ; but he turned his smooth, white parting on me with its "Straight up here, if you please !" and I answered, "Yes."

"I hear, Mr. Sampson," he resumed, presently, for our friend had a new cook, and dinner was not so punc-

tual as usual, "that your profession has recently suffered a great loss."

"In money!" said I.

He laughed at my ready association of loss with money, and replied, "No, in talent and vigor."

Not at once following out his allusion, I considered for a moment. "*Has it sustained a loss of that kind?*" said I. "I was not aware of it."

"Understand me, Mr. Sampson. I don't imagine that you have retired. It is not so bad as that. But Mr. Meltham —"

"O, to be sure!" said I. "Yes! Mr. Meltham, the young actuary of the 'Inestimable'?"

"Just so," he returned, in a consoling way.

"He is a great loss. He was at once the most profound, the most original, and the most energetic man I have ever known connected with Life Assurance."

I spoke strongly; for I had a high esteem and admiration for Meltham, and my gentleman had indefinitely conveyed to me some suspicion that he wanted to sneer at him. He recalled me to my guard by presenting that trim pathway up his head, with its infernal "Not on the grass, if you please, — the gravel."

"You knew him, Mr. Slinkton."

"Only by reputation. To have known him as an acquaintance, or as a friend, is an honor I should have sought if he had remained in society, though I might never have had the good fortune to attain it, being a man of far inferior mark. He was scarcely above thirty, I suppose?"

"About thirty."

"Ah!" He sighed in his former consoling way. "What creatures we are! To break up, Mr. Sampson, and become incapable of business at that time of life! — Any reason assigned for the melancholy fact?"

("Humph!" thought I, as I looked at him. "But I won't go up the track, and I WILL go on the grass.")

"What reason have you heard assigned, Mr. Slinkton?" I asked, point blank.

"Most likely a false one. You know what Rumor is, Mr. Sampson. I never repeat what I hear; it is the only way of paring the nails and shaving the head of

Rumor. But, when *you* ask me what reason I have heard assigned for Mr. Meltham's passing away from among men, it is another thing. I am not gratifying idle gossip then. I was told, Mr. Sampson, that Mr. Meltham had relinquished all his avocations and all his prospects, because he was, in fact, broken-hearted. A disappointed attachment I heard, — though it hardly seems probable, in the case of a man so distinguished and so attractive."

"Attractions and distinctions are no armor against death," said I.

"Oh! she died? Pray pardon me. I did not hear that. That, indeed, makes it very, very sad. Poor Mr. Meltham! She died? Ah, dear me! Lamentable, lamentable!"

I still thought his pity was not quite genuine, and I still suspected an unaccountable sneer under all this, until he said, as we were parted, like the other knots of talkers, by the announcement of dinner, —

"Mr. Sampson, you are surprised to see me so moved on behalf of a man whom I have never known. I am not so disinterested as you may suppose. I have suffered, and recently too, from death myself. I have lost one of two charming nieces, who were my constant companions. She died young, — barely three-and-twenty, — and even her remaining sister is far from strong. The world is a grave!"

He said this with deep feeling, and I felt reproached for the coldness of my manner. Coldness and distrust had been engendered in me, I knew, by my bad experiences; they were not natural to me; and I often thought how much I had lost in life, losing trustfulness, and how little I had gained, gaining hard caution. This state of mind being habitual to me, I troubled myself more about this conversation than I might have troubled myself about a greater matter. I listened to his talk at dinner, and observed how readily other men responded to it, and with what a graceful instinct he adapted his subjects to the knowledge and habits of those he talked with. As, in talking with me, he had easily started the subject I might be supposed to understand best, and to be the most interested in, so, in talking with others, he guided himself by the same rule. The company was of a varied

character; but he was not at fault, that I could discover, with any member of it. He knew just as much of each man's pursuit as made him agreeable to that man in reference to it, and just as little as made it natural in him to seek modestly for information when the theme was broached.

As he talked and talked, — but really not too much, for the rest of us seemed to force it upon him, — I became quite angry with myself. I took his face to pieces in my mind, like a watch, and examined it in detail. I could not say much against any of his features separately; I could say even less against them when they were put together. "Then is it not monstrous," I asked myself, "that because a man happens to part his hair straight up the middle of his head, I should permit myself to suspect, and even to detest him?"

(I may stop to remark that this was no proof of my sense. An observer of men who finds himself steadily repelled by some apparently trifling thing in a stranger is right to give it great weight. It may be the clew to the whole mystery. A hair or two will show where a lion is hidden. A very little key will open a very heavy door.)

I took my part in the conversation with him after a time, and we got on remarkably well. In the drawing-room I asked the host how long he had known Mr. Slinkton? He answered, not many months; he had met him at the house of a celebrated painter then present, who had known him well when he was travelling with his nieces in Italy for their health. His plans in life being broken by the death of one of them, he was reading with the intention of going back to college as a matter of form, taking his degree, and going into orders. I could not but argue with myself that here was the true explanation of his interest in poor Meltham, and that I had been almost brutal in my distrust on that simple head.

III.

ON the very next day but one, I was sitting behind my glass partition, as before, when he came into the outer office as before. The moment I saw him again without hearing him, I hated him worse than ever.

It was only for a moment that I had this opportunity ; for he waved his tight-fitting black glove the instant I looked at him, and came straight in.

“ Mr Sampson, good day ! I presume, you see, upon your kind permission to intrude upon you. I don’t keep my word in being justified by business, for my business here — if I may so abuse the word — is of the slightest nature.”

I asked, was it anything I could assist him in ?

“ I thank you, no. I merely called to inquire outside, whether my dilatory friend had been so false to himself as to be practical and sensible. But, of course, he has done nothing. I gave him your papers with my own hand, and he was hot upon the intention, but of course he has done nothing. Apart from the general human disinclination to do anything that ought to be done, I dare say there is a specialty about assuring one’s life ? You find it like will-making ? People are so superstitious, and take it for granted they will die soon afterwards ? ”

“ Up here, if you please. Straight up here, Mr. Sampson. Neither to the right nor to the left ! ” I almost fancied I could hear him breathe the words, as he sat smiling at me, with that intolerable parting exactly opposite the bridge of my nose.

“ There is such a feeling sometimes, no doubt,” I replied ; “ but I don’t think it obtains to any great extent.”

“ Well,” said he, with a shrug and a smile, “ I wish some good angel would influence my friend in the right direction. I rashly promised his mother and sister in

Norfolk, to see it done, and he promised them that he would do it. But I suppose he never will."

He spoke for a minute or two on indifferent topics and went away.

I had scarcely unlocked the drawers of my writing-table next morning when he reappeared. I noticed that he came straight to the door in the glass partition, and did not pause a single moment outside.

"Can you spare me two minutes, my dear Mr. Sampson?"

"By all means."

"Much obliged," laying his hat and umbrella on the table; "I came early, not to interrupt you. The fact is, I am taken by surprise, in reference to this proposal my friend has made."

"Has he made one?" said I.

"Ye-es," he answered, deliberately looking at me; and then a bright idea seemed to strike him; — "or he only tells me he has. Perhaps that may be a new way of evading the matter. By Jupiter, I never thought of that!"

Mr. Adams was opening the morning's letters in the outer office. "What is the name, Mr. Slinkton?" I asked.

"Beckwith."

I looked out at the door and requested Mr. Adams, if there were a proposal in that name, to bring it in. He had already laid it out of his hand on the counter. It was easily selected from the rest, and he gave it me. Alfred Beckwith. Proposal to effect a policy with us for two thousand pounds. Dated yesterday.

"From the Middle Temple, I see, Mr. Slinkton."

"Yes. He lives on the same staircase with me; his door is opposite. I never thought he would make me his reference though."

"It seems natural enough that he should."

"Quite so, Mr. Sampson; but I never thought of it. Let me see." He took the printed paper from his pocket. "How am I to answer all these questions!"

"According to the truth, of course," said I.

"O, of course!" he answered, looking up from the paper with a smile; "I meant they were so many. But

you do right to be particular. It stands to reason that you must be particular. Will you allow me to use your pen and ink?"

"Certainly."

"And your desk?"

"Certainly."

He had been hovering about between his hat and his umbrella, for a place to write on. He now sat down in my chair, at my blotting paper and inkstand, with the long walk up his head in accurate perspective before me, as I stood with my back to the fire.

Before answering each question he ran over it aloud, and discussed it. How long had he known Mr. Alfred Beckwith? That he had to calculate by years upon his fingers. What were his habits? No difficulty about them; temperate in the last degree, and took a little too much exercise, if anything. All the answers were satisfactory. When he had written them all, he looked them over, and finally signed them in a very pretty hand. He supposed he had now done with the business? I told him he was not likely to be troubled any further. Should he leave the papers there? If he pleased. Much obliged. Good morning!

I had had one other visitor before him; not at the office, but at my own house. That visitor had come to my bedside when it was not yet daylight, and had been seen by no one else but by my faithful confidential servant.

A second reference paper (for we required always two) was sent down into Norfolk, and was duly received back by post. This, likewise, was satisfactorily answered in every respect. Our forms were all complied with, we accepted the proposal, and the premium for one year was paid.

IV.

For six or seven months, I saw no more of Mr. Slinkton. He called once at my house, but I was not at home ; and he once asked me to dine with him in the Temple, but I was engaged. His friend's Assurance was effected in March. Late in September or early in October, I was down at Scarborough for a breath of sea air, where I met him on the beach. It was a hot evening ; he came toward me with his hat in his hand ; and there was the walk I had felt so strongly disinclined to take, in perfect order again, exactly in front of the bridge of my nose.

He was not alone, but had a young lady on his arm.

She was dressed in mourning, and I looked at her with great interest. She had the appearance of being extremely delicate, and her face was remarkably pale and melancholy ; but she was very pretty. He introduced her as his niece, Miss Niner.

"Are you strolling, Mr. Sampson ? Is it possible you can be idle ?"

It *was* possible, and I *was* strolling.

"Shall we stroll together ?"

"With pleasure."

The young lady walked between us, and we walked on the cool sea sand, in the direction of Filey.

"There have been wheels here," said Mr. Slinkton. "And now I look again, the wheels of a hand-carriage ! Margaret, my love, your shadow, without doubt !"

"Miss Niner's shadow ?" I repeated, looking down at it on the sand.

"Not that one," Mr. Slinkton returned, laughing. "Margaret, my dear, tell Mr. Sampson."

"Indeed," said the young lady, turning to me, "there is nothing to tell, — except that I constantly see the same invalid old gentleman, at all times, wherever I go. I

have mentioned it to my uncle, and he calls the gentleman my shadow."

"Does he live in Scarborough?" I asked.

"He is staying here."

"Do you live in Scarborough?"

"No, I am staying here. My uncle has placed me with a family here, for my health."

"And your shadow?" said I, smiling.

"My shadow," she answered, smiling too, "is — like myself — not very robust, I fear; for I lose my shadow sometimes, as my shadow loses me at other times. We both seem liable to confinement to the house. I have not seen my shadow for days and days; but it does oddly happen, occasionally, that wherever I go, for many days together, this gentleman goes. We have come together in the most unfrequented nooks on this shore."

"Is this he?" said I, pointing before us.

The wheels had swept down to the water's edge, and described a great loop on the sand in turning. Bringing the loop back toward us, and spinning it out as it came, was a hand-carriage drawn by a man.

"Yes," said Miss Niner, "this really is my shadow, uncle!"

As the carriage approached us and we approached the carriage, I saw within it an old man, whose head was sunk on his breast, and who was enveloped in a variety of wrappers. He was drawn by a very quiet but very keen-looking man, with iron-gray hair, who was slightly lame. They had passed us, when the carriage stopped, and the old gentleman within, putting out his arm, called to me by my name. I went back, and was absent from Mr. Slinkton and his niece for about five minutes.

When I rejoined them, Mr. Slinkton was the first to speak. Indeed, he said to me in a raised voice before I came up with him: "It is well you have not been longer, or my niece might have died of curiosity to know who her shadow is, Mr. Sampson."

"An old East India Director," said I. "An intimate friend of our friend's at whose house I first had the pleasure of meeting you. A certain Major Banks. You have heard of him?"

“Never.”

“Very rich, Miss Niner; but very old, and very crippled. An amiable man, sensible, — much interested in you. He has just been expatiating on the affection that he has observed to exist between you and your uncle.”

Mr. Slinkton was holding his hat again, and he passed his hand up the straight walk, as if he himself went up it serenely, after me.

“Mr. Sampson,” he said, tenderly pressing his niece’s arm in his, “our affection was always a strong one, for we have had but few near ties. We have still fewer now. We have associations to bring us together, that are not of this world, Margaret.”

“Dear uncle!” murmured the young lady, and turned her face aside to hide her tears.

“My niece and I have such remembrances and regrets in common, Mr. Sampson,” he feelingly pursued, “that it would be strange indeed if the relations between us were cold or indifferent. If I remember a conversation we once had together, you will understand the reference I make. Cheer up, dear Margaret. Don’t droop, don’t droop. My Margaret! I cannot bear to see you droop!”

The poor young lady was very much affected, but controlled herself. His feelings, too, were very acute. In a word, he found himself under such great need of a restorative, that he presently went away, to take a bath of seawater, leaving the young lady and me sitting by a point of rock, and probably presuming — but that you will say was a pardonable indulgence in a luxury — that she would praise him with all her heart.

She did, poor thing! With all her confiding heart, she praised him to me, for his care of her dead sister, and for his untiring devotion in her last illness. The sister had wasted away very slowly, and wild and terrible fantasies had come over her toward the end, but he had never been impatient with her, or at a loss; had always been gentle, watchful, and self-possessed. The sister had known him, as she had known him, to be the best of men, the kindest of men, and yet a man of such admirable strength of character, as to be a very tower for the support of their weak natures while their poor lives endured.

“I shall leave him, Mr. Sampson, very soon,” said the

young lady ; " I know my life is drawing to an end ; and when I am gone, I hope he will marry and be happy. I am sure he has lived single so long, only for my sake, and for my poor, poor sister's."

The little-hand carriage had made another great loop on the damp sand, and was coming back again, gradually spinning out a slim figure of eight, half a mile long.

" Young lady," said I, looking around, laying my hand upon her arm, and speaking in a low voice, " time presses. You hear the gentle murmur of that sea ? "

She looked at me with the utmost wonder and alarm, saying, " Yes ! "

" And you know what a voice is in it when the storm comes ? "

" Yes ! "

" You see how quiet and peaceful it lies before us, and you know what an awful sight of power without pity it might be, this very night ! "

" Yes ! "

" But if you had never heard or seen it, or heard of it in its cruelty, could you believe that it beats every inanimate thing in its way to pieces, without mercy, and destroys life without remorse ? "

" You terrify me, sir, by these questions ! "

" To save you, young lady, to save you ! For God's sake, collect your strength and collect your firmness ! If you were here alone, and hemmed in by the rising tide on the flow to fifty feet above your head, you could not be in greater danger than the danger you are now to be saved from."

The figure on the sand was spun out, and straggled off into a crooked little jerk that ended at the cliff very near us.

" As I am, before Heaven and the Judge of all mankind, your friend, and your dead sister's friend, I solemnly entreat you, Miss Niner, without one moment's loss of time, to come to this gentleman with me ! "

If the little carriage had been less near to us, I doubt if I could have got her away ; but it was so near that we were there before she had recovered the hurry of being urged from the rock. I did not remain there with her two minutes. Certainly within five, I had the inex-

pressible satisfaction of seeing her — from the point we had sat on, and to which I had returned — half supported and half carried up some rude steps notched in the cliff, by the figure of an active man. With that figure beside her, I knew she was safe anywhere.

I sat alone on the rock, awaiting Mr. Slinkton's return. The twilight was deepening and the shadows were heavy, when he came round the point, with his hat hanging at his button-hole, smoothing his wet hair with one of his hands, and picking out the old path with the other and a pocket-comb.

"My niece not here, Mr. Sampson?" he said, looking about.

"Miss Niner seemed to feel a chill in the air after the sun was down, and has gone home."

He looked surprised, as though she were not accustomed to do anything without him; even to originate so slight a proceeding. I persuaded Miss Niner," I explained.

"Ah!" said he. "She is easily persuaded — for her good. Thank you, Mr. Sampson; she is better within doors. The bathing-place was farther than I thought, to say the truth."

"Miss Niner is very delicate," I observed.

He shook his head and drew a deep sigh. "Very, very, very. You may recollect my saying so. The time that has since intervened has not strengthened her. The gloomy shadow that fell upon her sister so early in life seems, in my anxious eyes, to gather over her, ever darker, ever darker. Dear Margaret, dear Margaret! But we must hope."

The hand-carriage was spinning away before us at a most indecorous pace for an invalid vehicle, and was making most irregular curves upon the sand. Mr. Slinkton, noticing it after he had put his handkerchief to his eyes, said, —

"If I may judge from appearances, your friend will be upset, Mr. Sampson."

"It looks probable, certainly," said I.

"The servant must be drunk."

"The servants of old gentlemen will get drunk sometimes," said I.

"The major draws very light, Mr. Sampson."

"The major does draw light," said I.

By this time the carriage, much to my relief, was lost in the darkness. We walked on for a little, side by side over the sand, in silence. After a short while he said, in a voice still affected by the emotion that his niece's state of health had awakened in him, —

"Do you stay here long, Mr. Sampson?"

"Why, no. I am going away to-night."

"So soon? But business always holds you in request. Men like Mr. Sampson are too important to others, to be spared to their own need of relaxation and enjoyment."

"I don't know about that," said I. "However, I am going back."

"To London?"

"To London."

"I shall be there too, soon after you."

I knew that as well as he did. But I did not tell him so. Any more than I told him what defensive weapon my right hand rested on in my pocket, as I walked by his side. Any more than I told him why I did not walk on the seaside of him with the night closing in.

We left the beach, and our ways diverged. We exchanged good night, and had parted indeed, when he said, returning, —

"Mr. Sampson, *may* I ask? Poor Meltham, whom we spoke of, — dead yet?"

"Not when I last heard of him; but too broken a man to live long, and hopelessly lost to his old calling."

"Dear, dear, dear!" said he, with great feeling. "Sad, sad, sad! The world is a grave!" And so went his way.

It was not his fault if the world were not a grave; but I did not call that observation after him, any more than I had mentioned those other things just now enumerated. He went his way, and I went mine with all expedition. This happened, as I have said, either at the end of September or beginning of October. The next time I saw him, and the last time, was late in November.

V.

I HAD a very particular engagement to breakfast in the Temple. It was a bitter northeasterly morning, and the sleet and slush lay inches deep in the streets. I could get no conveyance, and was soon wet to the knees; but I should have been true to that appointment though I had had to wade to it up to my neck in the same impediments.

The appointment took me to some chambers in the Temple. They were at the top of a lonely corner house overlooking the river. The name, MR. ALFRED BECKWITH, was painted on the outer door. On the door opposite, on the same landing, the name MR. JULIUS SLINKTON. The doors of both sets of chambers stood open, so that anything said aloud in one set could be heard in the other.

I had never been in those chambers before. They were dismal, close, unwholesome, and oppressive; the furniture, originally good, and not yet old, was faded and dirty, — the rooms were in great disorder; there was a strong pervading smell of opium, brandy, and tobacco; the grate and fire-irons were splashed all over with unsightly blotches of rust; and on a sofa by the fire, in the room where breakfast had been prepared, lay the host, Mr. Beckwith, a man with all the appearances of the worst kind of drunkard, very far advanced upon his shameful way to death.

"Slinkton is not come yet," said this creature, staggering up when I went in; "I'll call him. Halloa! Julius Caesar! Come and drink!" As he hoarsely roared this out, he beat the poker and tongs together in a mad way, as if that were his usual manner of summoning his associate.

The voice of Mr. Slinkton was heard through the clatter from the opposite side of the staircase, and he came in. He had not expected the pleasure of meeting me. I have seen several artful men brought to a stand, but I

never saw a man so aghast as he was when his eyes rested on mine.

"Julius Cæsar," cried Beckwith, staggering between us, "Mist' Sampson! Mist' Sampson, Julius Cæsar! Julius, Mist' Sampson, is the friend of my soul. Julius keeps me plied with liquor, morning, noon, and night. Julius is a real benefactor. Julius threw the tea and coffee out of window when I used to have any. Julius empties all the water-jugs of their contents, and fills 'em with spirits. Julius winds me up and keeps me going. — Boil the brandy, Julius!"

There was a rusty and furred saucepan in the ashes, — the ashes looked like the accumulation of weeks, — and Beckwith, rolling and staggering between us as if he were going to plunge headlong into the fire, got the saucepan out, and tried to force it into Slinkton's hand.

"Boil the brandy, Julius Cæsar! Come! Do your usual office. — Boil the brandy!"

He became so fierce in his gesticulations with the saucepan, that I expected to see him lay open Slinkton's head with it. I therefore put out my hand to check him. He reeled back to the sofa, and sat there panting, shaking, and red-eyed, in his rags of dressing-gown, looking at us both. I noticed then that there was nothing to drink on the table but brandy, and nothing to eat but salted herrings, and a hot, sickly, highly peppered stew.

"At all events, Mr. Sampson," said Slinkton, offering me the smooth gravel path for the last time, "I thank you for interfering between me and this unfortunate man's violence. However you came here, Mr. Sampson, or with whatever motive you came here, at least I thank you for that."

"Boil the brandy," muttered Beckwith.

Without gratifying his desire to know how I came there, I said, quietly, "How is your niece, Mr. Slinkton?"

He looked hard at me, and I looked hard at him.

"I am sorry to say, Mr. Sampson, that my niece has proved treacherous and ungrateful to her best friend. She left me without a word of notice or explanation. She was misled, no doubt, by some designing rascal. Perhaps you may have heard of it?"

"I did hear that she was misled by a designing rascal. In fact, I have proof of it."

"Are you sure of that?" said he.

"Quite."

"Boil the brandy," muttered Beckwith. "Company to breakfast, Julius Caesar! Do your usual office, — provide the usual breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper. — Boil the brandy!"

The eyes of Slinkton looked from him to me, and he said, after a moment's consideration, —

"Mr. Sampson, you are a man of the world, and so am I. I will be plain with you."

"O no, you won't," said I, shaking my head.

"I tell you, sir, I will be plain with you."

"And I tell you, you will not," said I. "I know all about you. *You* plain with any one? Nonsense, nonsense!"

"I plainly tell you, Mr. Sampson," he went on, with a manner almost composed, "that I understand your object. You want to save your funds, and escape from your liabilities; these are old tricks of trade with you Office-gentlemen. But you will not do it, sir; you will not succeed. You have not an easy adversary to play against, when you play against me. We shall have to inquire, in due time, when and how Mr. Beckwith fell into his present habits. With that remark, sir, I put this poor creature and his incoherent wanderings of speech, aside, and wish you a good morning and a better case next time."

While he was saying this, Beckwith had filled a half-pint glass with brandy. At this moment, he threw the brandy at his face, and threw the glass after it. Slinkton put his hands up, half blinded with the spirit, and cut with the glass across the forehead. At the sound of the breakage, a fourth person came into the room, closed the door, and stood at it; he was a very quiet but very keen-looking man, with iron-gray hair, and slightly lame.

Slinkton pulled out his handkerchief, assuaged the pain in his smarting eyes, and dabbed the blood on his forehead. He was a long time about it, and I saw that, in the doing of it, a tremendous change came over him, occasioned by the change in Beckwith, — who ceased to

pant and tremble, sat upright, and never took his eyes off him. I never in my life saw a face in which abhorrence and determination were so forcibly painted, as in Beckwith's then.

"Look at me, you villain," said Beckwith, "and see me as I really am. I took these rooms, to make them a trap for you. I came into them as a drunkard, to bait the trap for you. You fell into the trap, and you will never leave it alive. On the morning when you last went to Mr. Sampson's office, I had seen him first. Your plot has been known to both of us, all along, and you have been counterplotted all along. What? Having been cajoled into putting that prize of two thousand pounds in your power, I was to be done to death with brandy, and, brandy not proving quick enough, with something quicker? Have I never seen you, when you thought my senses gone, pouring from your little bottle into my glass? Why, you Murderer and Forger, alone here with you in the dead of night, as I have so often been, I have had my hand upon the trigger of a pistol, twenty times, to blow your brains out!"

This sudden starting up of the thing that he had supposed to be his imbecile victim into a determined man, with a settled resolution to hunt him down and be the death of him, mercilessly expressed from head to foot, was, in the first shock, too much for him. Without any figure of speech, he staggered under it. But there is no greater mistake than to suppose that a man who is a calculating criminal is, in any phase of his guilt, otherwise than true to himself and perfectly consistent with his whole character. Such a man commits murder, and murder is the natural culmination of his course; such a man has to outface murder, and will do it with hardihood and effrontery. It is a sort of fashion to express surprise that any notorious criminal, having such crime upon his conscience, can so brave it out. Do you think that if he had it on his conscience at all, or had a conscience to have it upon, he would ever have committed the crime?

Perfectly consistent with himself, as I believe all such monsters to be, this Slinkton recovered himself, and showed a defiance that was sufficiently cold and quiet. He was white, he was haggard, he was changed; but

only as a sharper who had played for a great stake and had been outwitted and had lost the game.

"Listen to me, you villain," said Beckwith, "and let every word you hear me say be a stab in your wicked heart. When I took these rooms, to throw myself in your way and lead you on to the scheme that I knew my appearance and supposed character and habits would suggest to such a devil, how did I know that? Because you were no stranger to me. I knew you well. And I knew you to be the cruel wretch who, for so much money, had killed one innocent girl while she trusted him implicitly, and who was, by inches killing another."

Slinkton took out a snuff-box, took a pinch of snuff, and laughed.

"But see here," said Beckwith, never looking away, never raising his voice, never relaxing his face, never unclenching his hand. "See what a dull wolf you have been, after all! The infatuated drunkard who never drank a fiftieth part of the liquor you plied him with, but poured it away, here, there, everywhere, — almost before your eyes; who bought over the fellow you set to watch him and to ply him, by outbidding you in his bribe, before he had been at his work three days, — with whom you have observed no caution, yet who was so bent on ridding the earth of you as a wild beast, that he would have defeated you if you had been ever so prudent, — that drunkard whom you have, many a time, left on the floor of this room, and who has even let you go out of it, alive and undeceived, when you have turned him over with your foot, — has, almost as often, on the same night, within an hour, within a few minutes, watched you awake, had his hand at your pillow when you were asleep, turned over your papers, taken samples from your bottles and packets of powder, changed their contents, rifled every secret of your life!"

He had had another pinch of snuff in his hand, but had gradually let it drop from between his fingers to the floor; where he now smoothed it out with his foot, looking down at it the while.

"That drunkard," said Beckwith, "who had free access to your rooms at all times, that he might drink the strong drinks that you left in his way and be the

sooner ended, holding no more terms with you than he would hold with a tiger, has had his master-key for all your locks, his test for all your poisons, his clew to your cipher-writing. He can tell you, as well as you can tell him, how long it took to complete that deed, what doses there were, what intervals, what signs of gradual decay upon mind and body; what distempered fancies were produced, what observable changes, what physical pain. He can tell you, as well as you can tell him, that all this was recorded day by day, as a lesson of experience for future service. He can tell you, better than you can tell him, where that journal is at this moment."

Slinkton stopped the action of his foot, and looked at Beckwith.

"No," said the latter, as if answering a question from him. "Not in the drawer of the writing-desk that opens with the spring; it is not there, and it never will be there again."

"Then you are a thief!" said Slinkton.

Without any change whatever in the inflexible purpose, which it was quite terrific even to me to contemplate, and from the power of which I had always felt convinced it was impossible for this wretch to escape, Beckwith returned, —

"And I am your niece's shadow, too."

With an imprecation, Slinkton put his hand to his head, tore out some hair, and flung it to the ground. It was the end of the smooth walk; he destroyed it in the action, and it will soon be seen that his use for it was past.

Beckwith went on: "Whenever you left here, I left here. Although I understood that you found it necessary to pause in the completion of that purpose, to avert suspicion, still I watched you close, with the poor, confiding girl. When I had the diary, and could read it word by word, — it was only about the night before your last visit to Scarborough, — you remember the night? you slept with a small flat vial tied to your wrist, — I sent to Mr. Sampson, who was kept out of view. This is Mr. Sampson's trusty servant standing by the door. We three saved your niece among us."

Slinkton looked at us all, took an uncertain step or two

from the place where he had stood, returned to it, and glanced about him in a very curious way, — as one of the meaner reptiles might, looking for a hole to hide in. I noticed at the same time, that a singular change took place in the figure of the man, — as if it collapsed within his clothes, and they consequently became ill-shapen and ill-fitting.

“You shall know,” said Beckwith, “for I hope the knowledge will be bitter and terrible to you, why you have been pursued by one man, and why, when the whole interest that Mr. Sampson represents would have expended any money in hunting you down, you have been tracked to death at a single individual’s charge. I hear you have had the name of Meltham on your lips sometimes?”

I saw, in addition to those other changes, a sudden stoppage come upon his breathing.

“When you sent the sweet girl whom you murdered (you know with what artfully made-out surroundings and probabilities you sent her) to Meltham’s office, before taking her abroad to originate the transaction that doomed her to the grave, it fell to Meltham’s lot to see her and to speak with her. It did not fall to his lot to save her, though I know he would freely give his own life to have done it. He admired her; — I would say, he loved her deeply, if I thought it possible that you could understand the word. When she was sacrificed, he was thoroughly assured of your guilt. Having lost her, he had but one object left in life, and that was to avenge her and destroy you.”

I saw the villain’s nostrils rise and fall, convulsively; but I saw no moving at his mouth.

“That man, Meltham,” Beckwith steadily pursued, “was as absolutely certain that you could never elude him in this world, if he devoted himself to your destruction with his utmost fidelity and earnestness, and if he divided the sacred duty with no other duty in life, as he was certain that in achieving it he would be a poor instrument in the hands of Providence, and would do well before Heaven in striking you out from among living men. I am that man, and I thank God that I have done my work!”

If Slinkton had been running for his life from swift-footed savages, a dozen miles, he could not have shown more emphatic signs of being oppressed at heart and laboring for breath, than he showed now, when he looked at the pursuer who had so relentlessly hunted him down.

“ You never saw me under my right name before ; you see me under my right name now. You shall see me once again in the body, when you are tried for your life. You shall see me once again in the spirit, when the cord is round your neck, and the crowd are crying against you ! ”

When Meltham had spoken these last words, the miscreant suddenly turned away his face, and seemed to strike his mouth with his open hand. At the same instant, the room was filled with a new and powerful odor, and, almost at the same instant, he broke into a crooked run, leap, start, — I have no name for the spasm, — and fell, with a dull weight that shook the heavy old doors and windows in their frames.

That was the fitting end of him.

When we saw that he was dead, we drew away from the room, and Meltham, giving me his hand, said, with a weary air, —

“ I have no more work on earth, my friend. But I shall see her again elsewhere.”

It was in vain that I tried to rally him. He might have saved her, he said ; he had not saved her, and he reproached himself ; he had lost her, and he was broken-hearted.

“ The purpose that sustained me is over, Sampson, and there is nothing now to hold me to life. I am not fit for life ; I am weak and spiritless ; I have no hope and no object ; my day is done.”

In truth, I could hardly have believed that the broken man who then spoke to me was the man who had so strongly and so differently impressed me when his purpose was before him. I used such entreaties with him, as I could ; but he still said, and always said, in a patient, undemonstrative way, — nothing could avail him, — he was broken-hearted.

He died early in the next spring. He was buried by

the side of the poor young lady for whom he had cherished those tender and unhappy regrets ; and he left all he had to her sister. She lived to be a happy wife and mother ; she married my sister's son, who succeeded poor Meltham ; she is living now, and her children ride about the garden on my walking-stick when I go to see her.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SEA.

CHAPTER I.

THE VILLAGE.

“AND a mighty sing’lar and pretty place it is, as ever I saw in all the days of my life !” said Captain Jorgan, looking up at it.

Captain Jorgan had to look high to look at it, for the village was built sheer up the face of a steep and lofty cliff. There was no road in it, there was no wheeled vehicle in it, there was not a level yard in it. From the sea-beach to the cliff-top two irregular rows of white houses, placed opposite to one another, and twisting here and there, and there and here, rose, like the sides of a long succession of stages of crooked ladders, and you climbed up the village or climbed down the village by the staves between, some six feet wide or so, and made of sharp irregular stones. The old pack-saddle, long laid aside in most parts of England as one of the appendages of its infancy, flourished here intact. Strings of pack-horses and pack-donkeys toiled slowly up the staves of the ladders, bearing fish, and coal, and such other cargo as was unshipping at the pier from the dancing fleet of village boats, and from two or three little coasting traders. As the beasts of burden ascended laden, or descended light, they got so lost at intervals in the floating clouds of village smoke, that they seemed to dive down some of the village chimneys, and come to the surface again far off, high above others. No two houses in the village were alike, in chimney, size, shape, door, window, gable, roof-tree, anything. The sides of the ladders were musical with water, running clear and bright. The staves were musical with the clattering feet of the pack-horses

and pack-donkeys, and the voices of the fishermen urging them up, mingled with the voices of the fishermen's wives and their many children. The pier was musical with the wash of the sea, the creaking of capstans and windlasses, and the airy fluttering of little vanes and sails. The rough, sea-bleached boulders of which the pier was made, and the whiter boulders of the shore, were brown with drying nets. The red-brown cliffs, richly wooded to their extremest verge, had their softened and beautiful forms reflected in the bluest water, under the clear North Devonshire sky of a November day without a cloud. The village itself was so steeped in autumnal foliage, from the houses lying on the pier to the topmost round of the topmost ladder, that one might have fancied it was out a birds'-nesting, and was (as indeed it was) a wonderful climber. And mentioning birds, the place was not without some music from them too; for the rook was very busy on the higher levels, and the gull with his flapping wings was fishing in the bay, and the lusty little robin was hopping among the great stone blocks and iron rings of the break-water, fearless in the faith of his ancestors, and the Children in the Wood.

Thus it came to pass that Captain Jorgan, sitting balancing himself on the pier-wall, struck his leg with his open hand, as some men do when they are pleased — and as he always did when he was pleased — and said, —

“ A mighty sing'lar and pretty place it is, as ever I saw in all the days of my life ! ”

Captain Jorgan had not been through the village, but had come down to the pier by a winding side-road, to have a preliminary look at it from the level of his own natural element. He had seen many things and places, and had stowed them all away in a shrewd intellect and a vigorous memory. He was an American born, was Captain Jorgan, — a New-Englander, — but he was a citizen of the world, and a combination of most of the best qualities of most of its best countries.

For Captain Jorgan to sit anywhere in his long-skirted blue coat and blue trousers, without holding converse with everybody within speaking distance, was a sheer impossibility. So the captain fell to talking with the fishermen, and to asking them knowing questions about

the fishery, and the tides, and the currents, and the race of water off that point yonder, and what you kept in your eye, and got into a line with what else when you ran into the little harbor; and other nautical profundities. Among the men who exchanged ideas with the captain was a young fellow, who exactly hit his fancy, — a young fisherman of two or three-and-twenty, in the rough seadress of his craft, with a brown face, dark curling hair, and bright, modest eyes under his Sou'wester hat, and with a frank, but simple and retiring manner, which the captain found uncommonly taking. "I'd bet a thousand dollars," said the captain to himself, "that your father was an honest man!"

"Might you be married now?" asked the captain, when he had had some talk with this new acquaintance.

"Not yet."

"Going to be?" said the captain.

"I hope so."

The captain's keen glance followed the slightest possible turn of the dark eye, and the slightest possible tilt of the Sou'wester hat. The captain then slapped both his legs, and said to himself, —

"Never knew such a good thing in all my life! There's his sweetheart looking over the wall!"

There was a very pretty girl looking over the wall, from a little platform of cottage, vine, and fuchsia; and she certainly did not look as if the presence of this young fisherman in the landscape made it any the less sunny and hopeful for her.

Captain Jorgan, having doubled himself up to laugh with that hearty good-nature which is quite exultant in the innocent happiness of other people, had undoubled himself, and was going to start a new subject, when there appeared coming down the lower ladders of stones, a man whom he hailed as "Tom Pettifer, Ho!" Tom Pettifer, Ho, responded with alacrity, and in speedy course descended on the pier.

"Afraid of a sun-stroke in England in November, Tom, that you wear your tropical hat, strongly paid outside and paper-lined inside, here?" said the captain, eying it.

"It's as well to be on the safe side, sir," replied Tom.

"Safe side!" repeated the captain, laughing. "You'd

guard against a sun-stroke, with that old hat, in an Ice Pack. Wa'al! What have you made out at the Post-office?"

"It is the Post-office, sir,"

"What's the Post-office?" said the captain.

"The name, sir. The name keeps the Post-office."

"A coincidence!" said the captain. "A lucky hit! Show me where it is. Good by, shipmates, for the present! I shall come and have another look at you, afore I leave, this afternoon."

This was addressed to all there, but especially the young fisherman; so all there acknowledged it, but especially the young fisherman. "*He's a sailor!*" said one to another, as they looked after the captain moving away. That he was; and so outspeaking was the sailor in him, that although his dress had nothing nautical about it, with the single exception of its color, but was a suit of a shore-going shape and form, too long in the sleeves and too short in the legs, and too unaccommodating everywhere, terminating earthward in a pair of Wellington boots, and surmounted by a tall, stiff hat, which no mortal could have worn at sea in any wind under heaven; nevertheless, a glimpse of his sagacious, weather-beaten face, or his strong, brown hand, would have established the captain's calling. Whereas Mr. Pettifer—a man of a certain plump neatness, with a curly whisker, and elaborately nautical in a jacket, and shoes, and all things correspondent—looked no more like a seaman, beside Captain Jorgan, than he looked like a sea-serpent.

The two climbed high up the village,—which had the most arbitrary turns and twists in it, so that the cobbler's house came dead across the ladder, and to have held a reasonable course, you must have gone through his house, and through him too, as he sat at his work between two little windows, with one eye microscopically on the geological formation of that part of Devonshire, and the other telescopically on the open sea,—the two climbed high up the village, and stopped before a quaint little house, on which was painted, "MRS. RAYBROCK, DRAPER"; and also "POST-OFFICE." Before it, ran a rill of murmuring water, and access to it was gained by a little plank-bridge.

"Here 's the name," said Captain Jorgan, "sure enough You can come in if you like, Tom."

The captain opened the door, and passed into an odd little shop, about six feet high, with a great variety of beams and bumps in the ceiling, and, besides the principal window giving on the ladder of stones, a purblind little window of a single pane of glass, peeping out of an abutting corner at the sun-lighted ocean, and winking at its brightness.

"How do you do, ma'am?" said the captain. "I am very glad to see you. I have come a long way to see you."

"*Have* you, sir? Then I am sure I am very glad to see *you*, though I don't know you from Adam."

Thus a comely elderly woman, short of stature, plump of form, sparkling and dark of eye, who, perfectly clean and neat herself, stood in the midst of her perfectly clean and neat arrangements, and surveyed Captain Jorgan with smiling curiosity. "Ah! but you are a sailor, sir," she added, almost immediately, and with a slight movement of her hands, that was not very unlike wringing them; "then you are heartily welcome."

"Thank 'ee, ma'am," said the captain, "I don't know what it is, I am sure, that brings out the salt in me, but everybody seems to see it on the crown of my hat and the collar of my coat. Yes, ma'am, I am in that way of life."

"And the other gentleman, too," said Mrs. Raybrock.

"Well now, ma'am," said the captain, glancing shrewdly at the other gentleman, "you are that nigh right, that he goes to sea, — if that makes him a sailor. This is my steward, ma'am, Tom Pettifer; he 's been a'most all trades you could name, in the course of his life, — would have bought all your chairs and tables once, if you had wished to sell 'em, — but now he 's my steward. My name 's Jorgan, and I 'm a ship-owner, and I sail my own and my partners' ships, and have done so this five-and-twenty year. According to custom I am called Captain Jorgan, but I am no more a captain, bless your heart! than you are."

"Perhaps you 'll come into my parlor, sir, and take a chair?" said Mrs. Raybrock.

“Ex-actly what I was going to propose myself, ma’am. After you.”

Thus replying, and enjoining Tom to give an eye to the shop, Captain Jorgan followed Mrs. Raybrock into the little, low back-room, — decorated with divers plants in pots, tea-trays, old china teapots, and punch-bowls, — which was at once the private sitting-room of the Raybrock family and the inner cabinet of the post-office of the village of Steepways.

“Now, ma’am,” said the captain, “it don’t signify a cent to you where I was born, except —” But here the shadow of some one entering fell upon the captain’s figure, and he broke off to double himself up, slap both his legs, and ejaculate, “Never knew such a thing in all my life! Here he is again! How are you?”

These words referred to the young fellow who had so taken Captain Jorgan’s fancy down at the pier. To make it all quite complete he came in accompanied by the sweetheart whom the captain had detected looking over the wall. A prettier sweetheart the sun could not have shone upon that shining day. As she stood before the captain, with her rosy lips just parted in surprise, her brown eyes a little wider open than was usual from the same cause, and her breathing a little quickened by the ascent (and possibly by some mysterious hurry and flurry at the parlor door, in which the captain had observed her face to be for a moment totally eclipsed by the Sou’wester hat), she looked so charming, that the captain felt himself under a moral obligation to slap both his legs again. She was very simply dressed, with no other ornament than an autumnal flower in her bosom. She wore neither hat nor bonnet, but merely a scarf or kerchief, folded squarely back over the head, to keep the sun off, — according to a fashion that may be sometimes seen in the more genial parts of England as well as of Italy, and which is probably the first fashion of head-dress that came into the world when grasses and leaves went out.

“In my country,” said the captain, rising to give her his chair, and dexterously sliding it close to another chair on which the young fisherman must necessarily establish himself, — “in my country we should call Devonshire beauty first-rate!”

Whenever a frank manner is offensive, it is because it is strained or feigned; for there may be quite as much intolerable affectation in plainness as in mincing nicety. All that the captain said and did was honestly according to his nature; and his nature was open nature and good nature; therefore, when he paid this little compliment, and expressed with a sparkle or two of his knowing eye, "I see how it is, and nothing could be better," he had established a delicate confidence on that subject with the family.

"I was saying to your worthy mother," said the captain to the young man, after again introducing himself by name and occupation, — "I was saying to your mother (and you 're very like her) that it did n't signify where I was born, except that I was raised on question-asking ground, where the babies as soon as ever they come into the world, inquire of their mothers, 'Neow, how old may *you* be, and wa'at air you a goin' to name me?' — which is a fact." Here he slapped his leg. "Such being the case, I may be excused for asking you if your name 's Alfred?"

"Yes, sir, my name is Alfred," returned the young man.

"I am not a conjurer," pursued the captain, "and don't think me so, or I shall right soon undeceive you. Likewise don't think, if you please, though I *do* come from that country of the babies, that I am asking questions for question-asking's sake, for I am not. Somebody belonging to you went to sea?"

"My elder brother, Hugh," returned the young man. He said it in an altered and lower voice, and glanced at his mother, who raised her hands hurriedly, and put them together across her black gown, and looked eagerly at the visitor.

"No! For God's sake, don't think that!" said the captain, in a solemn way; "I bring no good tidings of him."

There was a silence, and the mother turned her face to the fire and put her hand between it and her eyes. The young fisherman slightly motioned toward the window, and the captain, looking in that direction, saw a young widow, sitting at a neighboring window across a little

garden, engaged in needle-work, with a young child sleeping on her bosom. The silence continued until the captain asked of Alfred, —

“How long is it since it happened?”

“He shipped for his last voyage better than three years ago.”

“Ship struck upon some reef or rock, as I take it,” said the captain, “and all hands lost?”

“Yes.”

“Wa'al!” said the captain, after a shorter silence, “Here I sit who may come to the same end, like enough. He holds the seas in the hollow of His hand. We must all strike somewhere and go down. Our comfort, then, for ourselves and one another is to have done our duty. I 'd wager your brother did his!”

“He did!” answered the young fisherman. “If ever man strove faithfully on all occasions to do his duty, my brother did. My brother was not a quick man (anything but that), but he was a faithful, true, and just man. We were the sons of only a small tradesman in this county, sir; yet our father was as watchful of his good name as if he had been a king.”

“A precious sight more so, I hope, — bearing in mind the general run of that class of crittur,” said the captain. “But I interrupt.”

“My brother considered that our father left the good name to us, to keep clear and true.”

“Your brother considered right,” said the captain; “and you couldn't take care of a better legacy. But again I interrupt.”

“No; for I have nothing more to say. We know that Hugh lived well for the good name, and we feel certain that he died well for the good name. And now it has come into my keeping. And that's all.”

“Well spoken!” cried the captain. “Well spoken, young man! Concerning the manner of your brother's death,” — by this time the captain had released the hand he had shaken, and sat with his own broad, brown hands spread out on his knees, and spoke aside, — “concerning the manner of your brother's death, it may be that I have some information to give you; though it may not be, for I am far from sure. Can we have a little talk alone?”

The young man rose; but not before the captain's quick eye had noticed that, on the pretty sweetheart's turning to the window to greet the young widow with a nod and a wave of the hand, the young widow had held up to her the needle-work on which she was engaged, with a patient and pleasant smile. So the captain said, being on his legs, —

“What might she be making now?”

“What is Margaret making, Kitty?” asked the young fisherman, — with one of his arms apparently mislaid somewhere.

As Kitty only blushed in reply, the captain doubled himself up as far as he could, standing, and said, with a slap of his leg, —

“In my country we should call it wedding-clothes. Fact! We should, I do assure you.”

But it seemed to strike the captain in another light too; for his laugh was not a long one, and he added, in quite a gentle tone, —

“And it's very pretty, my dear, to see her — poor young thing, with her fatherless child upon her bosom — giving up her thoughts to your home and your happiness. It's very pretty, my dear, and it's very good. May your marriage be more prosperous than hers, and be a comfort to her too. May the blessed sun see you all happy together, in possession of the good name, long after I have done ploughing the great salt field that is never sown!”

Kitty answered very earnestly, “Oh! Thank you, sir, with all my heart!” And, in her loving little way, kissed her hand to him, and possibly by implication to the young fisherman, too, as the latter held the parlor door open for the captain to pass out.

CHAPTER II.

THE MONEY.

"THE stairs are very narrow, sir," said Alfred Raybrock to Captain Jorgan.

"Like my cabin-stairs," returned the captain, on many a voyage."

"And they are rather inconvenient for the head."

"If my head can't take care of itself by this time, after all the knocking about the world it has had," replied the captain, as unconcernedly as if he had no connection with it, "it's not worth looking after."

Thus they came into the young fisherman's bedroom, which was as perfectly neat and clean as the shop and parlor below; though it was but a little place, with a sliding window, and a phrenological ceiling expressive of all the peculiarities of the house-roof. Here the captain sat down on the foot of the bed, and, glancing at a dreadful libel on Kitty which ornamented the wall, — the production of some wandering limner, whom the captain secretly admired, as having studied portraiture from the figure-heads of ships, — motioned to the young man to take the rush-chair on the other side of the small, round table. That done, the captain put his hand in the deep breast-pocket of his long-skirted blue coat, and took out of it a strong square case-bottle, — not a large bottle, but such as may be seen in any ordinary ship's medicine-chest. Setting this bottle on the table without removing his hand from it, Captain Jorgan then spake as follows: —

"In my last voyage homeward-bound," said the captain, "and that's the voyage off of which I now come straight, I encountered such weather off the Horn as is not very often met with, even there. I have rounded that stormy Cape pretty often, and I believe I first beat about there in the identical storms that blew the Devil's

horns and tail off, and led to the horns being worked up into tooth-picks for the plantation overseers in my country, who may be seen (if you travel down South, or away West, fur enough) picking their teeth with 'em, while the whips, made of the tail, flog hard. In this last voyage, homeward-bound for Liverpool from South America, I say to you, my young friend, it blew. Whole measures! No half measures, nor making believe to blow; it blew! Now I warn't blown clean out of the water into the sky, — though I expected to be even that, — but I was blown clean out of my course; and when at last it fell calm, it fell dead calm, and a strong current set one way, day and night, night and day, and I drifted — drifted — drifted — out of all the ordinary tracks and courses of ships, and drifted yet, and yet drifted. It behooves a man who takes charge of fellow-cruturs' lives, never to rest from making himself master of his calling. I never did rest, and consequently I knew pretty well ('specially looking over the side in the dead calm of that strong current) what dangers to expect, and what precautions to take against 'em. In short, we were driving head on to an island. There was no island in the chart, and, therefore, you may say it was ill manners in the island to be there; I don't dispute its bad breeding, but there it was. Thanks be to Heaven, I was as ready for the island as the island was ready for me. I made it out myself from the masthead, and I got enough way upon her in good time to keep her off. I ordered a boat to be lowered and manned, and went in that boat myself to explore the island. There was a reef outside it, and, floating in a corner of the smooth water within the reef, was a heap of sea-weed, and entangled in that sea-weed was this bottle."

Here the captain took his hand from the bottle for a moment, that the young fisherman might direct a wondering glance at it; and then replaced his hand and went on: —

"If ever you come — or even if ever you don't come — to a desert place, use you your eyes and your spy-glass well; for the smallest thing you see may prove of use to you, and may have some information or some warning in it. That's the principle on which I came to see this

bottle. I picked up the bottle and ran the boat alongside the island, and made fast and went ashore armed, with a part of my boat's crew. We found that every scrap of vegetation on the island (I give it you as my opinion, but scant and scrubby at the best of times) had been consumed by fire. As we were making our way, cautiously and toilsomely, over the pulverized embers, one of my people sank into the earth breast-high. He turned pale, and 'Haul me out smart, shipmates,' says he, 'for my feet are among bones.' We soon got him on his legs again, and then we dug up the spot, and we found that the man was right, and that his feet had been among bones. More than that, they were human bones; though whether the remains of one man, or of two or three men, what with calcination and ashes, and what with a poor practical knowledge of anatomy, I can't undertake to say. We examined the whole island and made out nothing else, save and except that, from its opposite side, I sighted a considerable tract of land, which land I was able to identify, and according to the bearings of which (not to trouble you with my log) I took a fresh departure. When I got aboard again I opened the bottle, which was oilskin-covered as you see, and glass-stoppered as you see. Inside of it," pursued the captain, suiting his action to his words, "I found this little crumpled, folded paper, just as you see. Outside of it was written, as you see, these words: '*Whoever finds this, is solemnly entreated by the dead to convey it unread to Alfred Raybrock, Steepways, North Devon, England.*' A sacred charge," said the captain, concluding his narrative, "and, Alfred Raybrock, there it is!"

"This is my poor brother's writing!"

"I suppose so," said Captain Jorgan. "I'll take a look out of this little window while you read it."

"Pray no, sir! I should be hurt. My brother could n't know it would fall into such hands as yours."

The captain sat down again on the foot of the bed, and the young man opened the folded paper with a trembling hand, and spread it on the table. The ragged paper, evidently creased and torn both before and after being written on, was much blotted and stained, and the ink had faded and run, and many words were wanting.

Before meeting death with a modicum of good. I put this before
 - wrote for my own self - some days ago - in a bottle - set it
 floating - loved father - if it ever comes to hand do as I would
 have done - first love and thought to dear wife & mother - if you
 find Hugh Raybock

Mem For Miss H Raybock to my Memory
 Under the Great East Window
 Very Unhappily in minute
 (L.C.) telling me that

500 £ is Stolen Money Likewise
 for reasons here noted down

no influence
 looks
 He will I might
 If proof of the gift taken off
 He will I might
 Lanigan gold - is money the old man
 He will I might
 He will I might
 He will I might

What the captain and the young fisherman made out together, after much re-reading and much humoring of the folds of the paper, is given on this page.

The young fisherman had become more and more agitated, as the writing had become clearer to him. He now left it lying before the captain, over whose shoulder he had been reading it, and dropping into his former seat, leaned forward on the table and laid his face in his hands.

"What, man," urged the captain, "don't give in! Be up and doing like a man!"

"It is selfish, I know, — but doing what, doing what?" cried the young fisherman, in complete despair, and stamping his sea-boot on the ground.

"Doing what?" returned the captain. "Something! I'd go down to the little breakwater below yonder, and take a wrench at one of the salt-rusted iron-rings there, and either wrench it up by the roots or wrench my teeth out of my head, sooner than I'd do nothing. Nothing!" ejaculated the captain. "Any fool or faint-heart can do that, and nothing can come of nothing, — which was pretended to be found out, I believe, by one of them Latin

critters," said the captain with the deepest disdain; "as if Adam had n't found it out, afore ever he so much as named the beasts!"

Yet the captain saw, in spite of his bold words, that there was some greater reason than he yet understood for the young man's distress. And he eyed him with a sympathizing curiosity.

"Come, come!" continued the captain. "Speak out. What is it, boy!"

"You have seen how beautiful she is, sir," said the young man, looking up for the moment, with a flushed face and rumped hair.

"Did any man ever say she warn't beautiful?" retorted the captain. "If so, go and lick him."

The young man laughed fretfully in spite of himself, and said, "It's not that, it's not that."

"Wa'al, then, what is it?" said the captain, in a more soothing tone.

The young fisherman mournfully composed himself to tell the captain what it was, and began: "We were to have been married next Monday week —"

"Were to have been!" interrupted Captain Jorgan. "And are to be? Hey?"

Young Raybrock shook his head, and traced out with his forefinger the words "*poor father's five hundred pounds*," in the written paper.

"Go along," said the captain. "Five hundred pounds? Yes?"

"That sum of money," pursued the young fisherman, entering with the greatest earnestness on his demonstration, while the captain eyed him with equal earnestness, "was all my late father possessed. When he died, he owed no man more than he left means to pay, but he had been able to lay by only five hundred pounds."

"Five hundred pounds," repeated the captain. "Yes?"

"In his lifetime, years before, he had expressly laid the money aside to leave to my mother, — like to settle upon her, if I make myself understood."

"Yes?"

"He had risked it once — my father put down in writing at that time, respecting the money — and was resolved never to risk it again."

"Not a spec'lator," said the captain. "My country would n't have suited him. Yes?"

"My mother has never touched the money till now. And now it was to have been laid out, this very next week, in buying me a handsome share in our neighboring fishery here, to settle me in life with Kitty."

The captain's face fell, and he passed and repassed his sun-browned right hand over his thin hair, in a discomfited manner.

"Kitty's father has no more than enough to live on, even in the sparing way in which we live about here. He is a kind of bailiff or steward of manor rights here, and they are not much, and it is but a poor little office. He was better off once, and Kitty must never marry to mere drudgery and hard living."

The captain still sat stroking his thin hair, and looking at the young fisherman.

"I am as certain that my father had no knowledge that any one was wronged as to this money, or that any restitution ought to be made, as I am certain that the sun now shines. But, after this solemn warning from my brother's grave in the sea, that the money is Stolen Money," said Young Raybrock, forcing himself to the utterance of the words, "can I doubt it? Can I touch it?"

"About not doubting, I ain't so sure," observed the captain; "but about not touching — no — I don't think you can."

"See then," said Young Raybrock, "why I am so grieved. Think of Kitty. Think what I have got to tell her!"

His heart quite failed him again when he had come round to that, and he once more beat his sea-boot softly on the floor. But not for long; he soon began again, in a quietly resolute tone.

"However! Enough of that! You spoke some brave words to me just now, Captain Jorgan, and they shall not be spoken in vain. I have got to do something. What I have got to do, before all other things, is to trace out the meaning of this paper, for the sake of the Good Name that has no one else to put it right. And still for the sake of the Good Name, and my father's

memory, not a word of this writing must be breathed to my mother, or to Kitty, or to any human creature. You agree in this ? ”

“ I don’t know what they ’ll think of us below,” said the captain, “ but for certain I can’t oppose it. Now, as to tracing. How will you do ? ”

They both, as by consent, bent over the paper again, and again carefully puzzled out the whole of the writing.

“ I make out that this would stand, if all the writing was here, ‘ Inquire among the old men living there, for ’ — some one. Most like, you ’ll go to this village named here ? ” said the captain, musing, with his finger on the name.

“ Yes ! And Mr. Tregarthen is a Cornishman, and — to be sure ! — comes from Lanrean.”

“ Does he ? ” said the captain quietly. “ As I ain’t acquainted with him, who may *he* be ? ”

“ Mr. Tregarthen is Kitty’s father.”

“ Ay, ay ! ” cried the captain. “ Now you speak ! Tregarthen knows this village of Lanrean, then ? ”

“ Beyond all doubt he does. I have often heard him mention it, as being his native place. He knows it well.”

“ Stop half a moment,” said the captain. “ We want a name here. You could ask Tregarthen (or if you could n’t I could) what names of old men he remembers in his time in those diggings ? Hey ? ”

“ I can go straight to his cottage, and ask him now.”

“ Take me with you,” said the captain, rising in a solid way that had a most comfortable reliability in it, “ and just a word more first. I have knocked about harder than you, and have got along further than you. I have had, all my sea-going life long, to keep my wits polished bright with acid and friction, like the brass cases of the ship’s instruments. I ’ll keep you company on this expedition. Now you don’t live by talking any more than I do. Clench that hand of yours in this hand of mine, and that ’s a speech on both sides.”

Captain Jorgan took command of the expedition with that hearty shake. He at once refolded the paper exactly as before, replaced it in the bottle, put the stopper in, put the oilskin over the stopper, confided the whole

to Young Raybrock's keeping, and led the way down stairs.

But it was harder navigation below stairs than above. The instant they set foot in the parlor the quick, womanly eye detected that there was something wrong. Kitty exclaimed, frightened, as she ran to her lover's side, "Alfred! What's the matter?" Mrs. Raybrock cried out to the captain, "Gracious! what have you done to my son to change him like this all in a minute?" And the young widow—who was there with her work upon her arm—was at first so agitated that she frightened the little girl she held in her hand, who hid her face in her mother's skirts and screamed. The captain, conscious of being held responsible for this domestic change, contemplated it with quite a guilty expression of countenance, and looked to the young fisherman to come to his rescue.

"Kitty, darling," said Young Raybrock, "Kitty, dearest love, I must go away to Lanrean, and I don't know where else or how much further, this very day. Worse than that—our marriage, Kitty, must be put off, and I don't know for how long."

Kitty stared at him, in doubt and wonder and in anger, and pushed him from her with her hand.

"Put off?" cried Mrs. Raybrock. "The marriage put off? And you going to Lanrean! Why, in the name of the dear Lord?"

"Mother dear, I can't say why; I must not say why. It would be dishonorable and undutiful to say why."

"Dishonorable and undutiful?" returned the dame. "And is there nothing dishonorable or undutiful in the boy's breaking the heart of his own plighted love, and his mother's heart too, for the sake of the dark secrets and counsels of a wicked stranger? Why did you ever come here?" she apostrophized the innocent captain. "Who wanted you? Where did you come from? Why could n't you rest in your own bad place, wherever it is, instead of disturbing the peace of quiet unoffending folk like us?"

"And what," sobbed the poor little Kitty, "have I ever done to you, you hard and cruel captain, that you should come and serve me so?"

And then they both began to weep most pitifully, while the captain could only look from the one to the other, and lay hold of himself by the coat collar.

"Margaret," said the poor young fisherman, on his knees at Kitty's feet, while Kitty kept both her hands before her tearful face, to shut out the traitor from her view, — but kept her fingers wide asunder and looked at him all the time, — "Margaret, you have suffered so much, so uncomplainingly, and are always so careful and considerate! Do take my part for poor Hugh's sake!"

The quiet Margaret was not appealed to in vain. "I will, Alfred," she returned, "and I do. I wish this gentleman had never come near us"; whereupon the captain laid hold of himself the tighter; "but I take your part for all that. I am sure you have some strong reason and some sufficient reason for what you do, strange as it is, and even for not saying why you do it, strange as that is. And, Kitty darling, you are bound to think so more than any one, for true love believes everything, and bears everything, and trusts everything. And, mother dear, you are bound to think so too, for you know you have been blest with good sons, whose word was always as good as their oath, and who were brought up in as true a sense of honor as any gentleman in this land. And I am sure you have no more call, mother, to doubt your living son than to doubt your dead son; and for the sake of the dear dead, I stand up for the dear living."

"Wa'al now," the captain struck in, with enthusiasm, "this I say, That whether your opinions flatter me or not, you are a young woman of sense, and spirit, and feeling; and I'd sooner have you by my side, in the hour of danger, than a good half of the men I've ever fallen in with — or fallen out with, ayther."

Margaret did not return the captain's compliment, or appear fully to reciprocate his good opinion, but she applied herself to the consolation of Kitty, and of Kitty's mother-in-law that was to have been next Monday week, and soon restored the parlor to a quiet condition.

"Kitty, my darling," said the young fisherman, "I must go to your father to entreat him still to trust me in spite of this wretched change and mystery, and to ask

him for some directions concerning Lanrean. Will you come home? Will you come with me, Kitty?"

Kitty answered not a word, but rose sobbing, with the end of her simple head-dress at her eyes. Captain Jorgan followed the lovers out, quite sheepishly, pausing in the shop to give an instruction to Mr. Pettifer.

"Here, Tom!" said the captain, in a low voice. "Here's something in your line. Here's an old lady poorly and low in her spirits. Cheer her up a bit, Tom. Cheer 'em all up."

Mr. Pettifer, with a brisk nod of intelligence, immediately assumed his steward face, and went with his quiet, helpful, steward step into the parlor, where the captain had the great satisfaction of seeing him, through the glass door, take the child in his arms (who offered no objection), and bend over Mrs. Raybrock, administering soft words of consolation.

"Though what he finds to say, unless he's telling her that 't'll soon be over, or that most people is so at first, or that it'll do her good afterward, I cannot imagine!" was the captain's reflection as he followed the lovers.

He had not far to follow them, since it was but a short descent down the stony ways to the cottage of Kitty's father. But short as the distance was, it was long enough to enable the captain to observe that he was fast becoming the village Ogre; for there was not a woman standing working at her door, or a fisherman coming up or going down, who saw Young Raybrock unhappy and little Kitty in tears, but he or she instantly darted a suspicious and indignant glance at the captain, as the foreigner who must somehow be responsible for this unusual spectacle. Consequently, when they came into Tregarthen's little garden, — which formed the platform from which the captain had seen Kitty peeping over the wall, — the captain brought to, and stood off and on at the gate, while Kitty hurried to hide her tears in her own room, and Alfred spoke with her father, who was working in the garden. He was a rather infirm man, but could scarcely be called old yet, with an agreeable face and a promising air of making the best of things. The conversation began on his side with great cheerfulness and good humor, but soon became distrustful, and soon

angry. That was the captain's cue for striking both into the conversation and the garden.

"Morning, sir!" said Captain Jorgan. "How do you do?"

"The gentleman I am going away with," said the young fisherman to Tregarthen.

"Oh!" returned Kitty's father, surveying the unfortunate captain with a look of extreme disfavor. "I confess that I can't say I am glad to see you."

"No," said the captain, "and, to admit the truth, that seems to be the general opinion in these parts. But don't be hasty; you may think better of me by and by."

"I hope so," observed Tregarthen.

"Wa'al, I hope so," observed the captain, quite at his ease; "more than that, I believe so, — though you don't. Now, Mr. Tregarthen, you don't want to exchange words of mistrust with me; and if you did, you could n't, because I would n't. You and I are old enough to know better than to judge against experience from surfaces and appearances; and if you have n't lived to find out the evil and injustice of such judgments, you are a lucky man."

The other seemed to shrink under this remark, and replied, "Sir, I *have* lived to feel it deeply."

"Wa'al," said the captain, mollified, "then I've made a good cast without knowing it. Now, Tregarthen, there stands the lover of your only child, and here stand I who know his secret. I warrant it a righteous secret, and none of his making, though bound to be of his keeping. I want to help him out with it, and tewwards that end we ask you to favor us with the names of two or three old residents in the village of Lanrean. As I am taking out my pocket-book and pencil to put the names down, I may as well observe to you that this, wrote atop of the first page here, is my name and address: 'Silas Jonas Jorgan, Salem, Massachusetts, United States.' If ever you take it in your head to run over any morning, I shall be glad to welcome you. Now, what may be the spelling of these said names?"

"There was an elderly man," said Tregarthen, "named David Polreath. He may be dead."

"Wa'al," said the captain, cheerfully, "if Polreath's dead and buried, and can be made of any service to us, Polreath won't object to our digging of him up. Polreath's down, anyhow."

"There was another named Penrewen. I don't know his Christian name."

"Never mind his Chris'en name," said the captain. "Penrewen, for short."

"There was another named John Tredgear."

"And a pleasant-sounding name, too," said the captain; "John Tredgear's booked."

"I can recall no other except old Parvis."

"One of old Parvis's fam'ly I reckon," said the captain, "kept a dry-goods store in New York city, and realized a handsome competency by burning his house to ashes. Same name, anyhow. David Polreath, Unchris'en Penrewen, John Tredgear, and old Arson Parvis."

"I cannot recall any others at the moment."

"Thank 'ee," said the captain. "And so, Tregarthen, hoping for your good opinion yet, and likewise for the fair Devonshire Flower's, your daughter's, I give you my hand, sir, and wish you good day."

Young Raybrock accompanied him disconsolately; for there was no Kitty at the window when he looked up, no Kitty in the garden when he shut the gate, no Kitty gazing after them along the stony ways when they begin to climb back.

"Now I tell you what," said the captain. "Not being at present calc'lated to promote harmony in your family, I won't come in. You go and get your dinner at home, and I'll get mine at the little hotel. Let our hour of meeting be two o'clock, and you'll find me smoking a cigar in the sun afore the hotel door. Tell Tom Pettifer, my steward, to consider himself on duty, and to look after your people till we come back; you'll find he'll have made himself useful to 'em already, and will be quite acceptable."

All was done as Captain Jorgan directed. Punctually at two o'clock the young fisherman appeared with his knapsack at his back; and punctually at two o'clock the captain jerked away the last feather-end of his cigar.

"Let me carry your baggage, Captain Jorgan; I can easily take it with mine."

"Thank 'ee," said the captain. "I'll carry it myself. It's only a comb."

They climbed out of the village, and paused among the trees and fern on the summit of the hill above, to take breath, and to look down at the beautiful sea. Suddenly the captain gave his leg a resounding slap, and cried, "Never knew such a right thing in all my life!" — and ran away.

The cause of this abrupt retirement on the part of the captain was little Kitty among the trees. The captain went out of sight and waited, and kept out of sight and waited, until it occurred to him to beguile the time with another cigar. He lighted it, and smoked it out, and still he was out of sight and waiting. He stole within sight at last, and saw the lovers, with their arms entwined and their bent heads touching, moving slowly among the trees. It was the golden time of the afternoon then, and the captain said to himself, "Golden sun, golden sea, golden sails, golden leaves, golden love, golden youth, — a golden state of things altogether!"

Nevertheless the captain found it necessary to hail his young companion before going out of sight again. In a few moments more he came up and they began their journey.

"That still young woman with the fatherless child," said Captain Jorgan, as they fell into step, "did n't throw her words away; but good honest words are never thrown away. And now that I am conveying you off from that tender little thing that loves, and relies, and hopes, I feel just as if I was the snarling crittur in the picters, with the tight legs, the long nose, and the feather in his cap, the tips of whose mustaches get up nearer to his eyes the wickedder he gets."

The young fisherman knew nothing of Mephistopheles; but he smiled when the captain stopped to double himself up and slap his leg, and they went along in right good-fellowship.

CHAPTER III.

THE CLUB-NIGHT.

A CORNISH moor, when the east-wind drives over it, is as cold and rugged a scene as a traveller is likely to find in a year's travel. A Cornish moor, in the dark, is as black a solitude as the traveller is likely to wish himself well out of in the course of a life's wanderings. A Cornish moor, in a night fog, is a wilderness where the traveller needs to know his way well, or the chances are very strong that his life and his wanderings will soon perplex him no more.

Captain Jorgan and the young fisherman had faced the east and the southeast winds from the first rising of the sun after their departure from the village of Steepways. Thrice had the sun risen, and still all day long had the sharp wind blown at them like some malevolent spirit bent on forcing them back. But Captain Jorgan was too familiar with all the winds that blow, and too much accustomed to circumvent their slightest weaknesses, and get the better of them in the long run, to be beaten by any member of the airy family. Taking the year round, it was his opinion that it mattered little what wind blew, or how hard it blew; so he was as indifferent to the wind on this occasion as a man could be who frequently observed "that it freshened him up," and who regarded it in the light of an old acquaintance. One might have supposed, from his way, that there was even a kind of fraternal understanding between Captain Jorgan and the wind, as between two professed fighters often opposed to one another. The young fisherman, for his part, was accustomed within his narrower limits to hold hard weather cheap, and had his anxious object before him; so the wind went by him, too, little heeded, and went upon its way to kiss Kitty.

Their varied course had lain by the side of the sea, where the brown rocks cleft it into fountains of spray, and inland where once barren moors were reclaimed and cultivated, and by lonely villages of poor-enough cabins with mud walls, and by a town or two with an old church and a market-place. But, always travelling through a sparsely inhabited country and over a broad expanse, they had come at last upon the true Cornish moor within reach of Lanrean. None but gaunt spectres of miners passed them here, with metallic masks of faces, ghastly with dust of copper and tin; anon, solitary works on remote hill-tops, and bare machinery of torturing wheels and cogs and chains, writhing up hillsides, were the few scattered hints of human presence in the landscape; during long intervals, the bitter wind, howling and tearing at them like a fierce wild monster, had them all to itself.

"A sing'lar thing it is," said the captain, looking round at the brown desert of rank grass and poor moss, "how like this airth is to the men that live upon it! Here's a spot of country rich with hidden metals, and it puts on the worst rags of clothes possible, and crouches and shivers and makes believe to be so poor that it can't so much as afford a feed for a beast. Just like a human miser, ain't it?"

"But they find the miser out," returned the young fisherman, pointing to where the earth by the water-courses and along the valleys was turned up for miles, in trying for metal.

"Ay, they find him out," said the captain; "but he makes a struggle of it even then, and holds back all he can. He's a 'cute 'un."

The gloom of evening was already gathering on the dreary scene, and they were, at the shortest and best, a dozen miles from their destination. But the captain, in his long-skirted blue coat and his boots and his hat and his square shirt-collar, and without any extra defence against the weather, walked coolly along with his hands in his pockets, as if he lived under ground somewhere hard by, and had just come up to show his friend the road.

"I'd have liked to have had a look at this place, too," said the captain, "when there was a monstrous sweep of

water rolling over it, dragging the powerful great stones along and piling 'em atop of one another, and depositing the foundations for all manner of superstitions. Bless you! the old priests, smart mechanical critturs as they were, never piled up many of these stones. Water's the lever that moved 'em. When you see 'em thick and blunt tewwards one point of the compass, and fined away thin tewwards the opposite point, you may be as good as moral sure that the name of the ancient Druid that fixed 'em was Water."

The captain referred to some great blocks of stone presenting this characteristic, which were wonderfully balanced and heaped on one another, on a desolate hill. Looking back at these, as they stood out against the lurid glare of the west, just then expiring, they were not unlike enormous antediluvian birds, that had perched there on crags and peaks, and had been petrified there.

"But it's an interesting country," said the captain, "fact! It's old in the annals of that said old Arch-Druid, Water, and it's old in the annals of the said old parson-critturs too. It's a mighty interesting thing to set your boot (as I did this day) on a rough, honey-combed old stone, with just nothing you can name but weather visible upon it; which the scholars that go about with hammers, chipping pieces off the universal airth, find to be an inscription entreating prayers for the soul of some for-ages-bust-up crittur of a governor that overtaxed a people never heard of." Here the captain stopped to slap his leg. It's a mighty interesting thing to come upon a score or two of stores set up on end in a desert, — some short, some tall, some leaning here, some leaning there, and to know that they were pop'larly supposed — and may be still — to be a group of Cornish men that got changed into that geological formation for playing a game upon a Sunday. They would n't have it in my country, I reckon, even if they could get it, — but it's very interesting."

In this the captain, though it amused him, was quite sincere. Quite as sincere as when he added, after looking well about him; "That fog-bank, coming up as the sun goes down, will spread, and we shall have to feel our way into Lanrean full as much as see it."

All the way along the young fisherman had spoken at times to the captain of his interrupted hopes, and of the family good name, and of the restitution that must be made, and of the cherished plans of his heart, so near attainment, which must be set aside for it. In his simple faith and honor, he seemed incapable of entertaining the idea that it was within the bounds of possibility to evade the doing of what their inquiries should establish to be right. This was very agreeable to Captain Jorgan, and won his genuine admiration. Wherefore he now turned the discourse back into that channel, and encouraged his companion to talk of Kitty, and to calculate how many years it would take, without a share in the fishery, to establish a home for her, and to relieve his honest heart by dwelling on its anxieties.

Meanwhile it fell very dark, and the fog became dense, though the wind howled at them and bit them as savagely as ever. The captain had carefully taken the bearings of Lanrean from the map, and carried his pocket-compass with him; the young fisherman, too, possessed that kind of cultivated instinct for shaping a course which is often found among men of such pursuits. But although they held a true course in the main, and corrected it when they lost the road, by aid of the compass and a light obtained with great difficulty in the roomy depths of the captain's hat, they could not help losing the road often. On such occasions they would become involved in the difficult ground of the spongy moor, and, after making a laborious loop, would emerge upon the road at some point they had passed before they left it, and thus would have a good deal of work to do twice over. But the young fisherman was not easily lost and the captain (and his comb) would probably have turned up with perfect coolness and self-possession, at any appointed spot on the surface of this globe. Consequently, they were no more than retarded in their progress to Lanrean, and arrived in that small place at nine o'clock. By that time the captain's hat had fallen back over his ears, and rested on the nape of his neck; but he still had his hands in his pocket, and showed no other sign of dilapidation.

They had almost run against a low stone house with red-curtained windows before they knew they had hit

upon the little hotel, the King Arthur's Arms. They could just descry through the mist, on the opposite side of the narrow road, other low stone buildings which were its outhouses and stables; and somewhere overhead its invisible sign was being wrathfully swung by the wind.

"Now, wait a bit," said the captain. "They might be full here, or they might offer us cold quarters. Consequently, the policy is to take an observation, and, when we've found the warmest room, walk right slap into it."

The warmest room was evidently that from which fire and candle streamed reddest and brightest, and from which the sound of voices engaged in some discussion came out into the night. Captain Jorgan, having established the bearings of this room, merely said to his young friend, "Follow me!" and was in it before King Arthur's Arms had any notion that they infolded a stranger.

"Order, order, order!" cried several voices, as the captain, with his hat under his arm, stood within the door he had opened.

"Gentlemen," said the captain, advancing, "I am much beholden to you for the opportunity you give me of addressing you; but will not detain you with any lengthened observations. I have the honor to be a cousin of yours on the Uncle Sam side; this young friend of mine is a nearer relation of yours on the Devonshire side; we are both pretty nigh used up, and much in want of supper. I thank you for your welcome, and I am proud to take you by the hand, sir, and I hope I see you well."

These last words were addressed to a jolly-looking chairman, with a wooden hammer near him; which, but for the captain's friendly grasp, he would have taken up and hammered the table with.

"How do you *do*, sir?" said the captain, shaking this chairman's hand with the greatest heartiness, while his new friend ineffectually eyed his hammer of office; "when you come to my country, I shall be proud to return your welcome, sir, and that of this good company."

The captain now took his seat near the fire, and invited his companion to do the like, — whom he congratulated aloud, on their having "fallen on their feet."

The company, who might be about a dozen in number, were at a loss what to make of, or do with, the captain. But one little old man in long, flapping shirt-collars, who, with only his face and them visible through a cloud of tobacco-smoke, looked like a superannuated Cherubim, said sharply, —

“This is a Club.”

“This is a Club,” the captain repeated to his young friend. “Wa'al now, that 's curious! Did n't I say, coming along, if we could only light upon a Club?”

The captain's doubling himself up and slapping his leg finished the chairman. He had been softening toward the captain from the first, and he melted. “Gentlemen King Arthurs,” said he, rising, “though it is not the custom to admit strangers, still, as we have broken the rule once to-night, I will exert my authority and break it again. And while the supper of these travellers is cooking,” — here his eye fell on the landlord, who discreetly took the hint and withdrew to see about it, — “I will recall you to the subject of the seafaring man.”

“D' ye hear!” said the captain, aside to the young fisherman; “that 's in our way. Who 's the seafaring man, I wonder?”

“I see several old men here,” returned the young fisherman, eagerly, for his thoughts were always on his object. “Perhaps one or more of the old men whose names you wrote down in your book may be here.”

“Perhaps,” said the captain; “I 've got my eye on 'em. But don't force it. Try if it won't come nat'ral.”

Thus the two, behind their hands, while they sat warming them at the fire. Simultaneously, the Club beginning to be at its ease again, and resuming the discussion of the seafaring man, the captain winked to his fellow-traveller to let him attend to it.

As it was a kind of conversation not altogether unprecedented in such assemblages, where most of those who spoke at all spoke all at once, and where half of those could put no beginning to what they had to say, and the other half could put no end, the tendency of the debate was discursive, and not very intelligible. All the captain had made out, down to the time when the separate little table laid for two was covered with a

smoking broiled fowl and rashers of bacon, reduced itself to these heads. That a seafaring man had arrived at the King Arthur's Arms, benighted, an hour or so earlier in the evening. That the Gentlemen King Arthurs had admitted him, though all unknown, into the sanctuary of their Club. That they had invited him to make his footing good by telling a story. That he had, after some pressing, begun a story of adventure and shipwreck; at an interesting point of which he had suddenly broke of, and positively refused to finish. That he had thereupon taken up a candlestick, and gone to bed, and was now the sole occupant of a double-bedded room up stairs. The question raised on these premises appeared to be, whether the seafaring man was not in a state of contumacy and contempt, and ought not to be formally voted and declared in that condition. This deliberation involved the difficulty (suggested by the more jocosely and irreverently of the Gentlemen King Arthurs) that it might make no sort of difference to the seafaring man whether he was so voted and declared, or not.

Captain Jorgan and the young fisherman ate their supper and drank their beer, and their knives and forks had ceased to rattle and their glasses had ceased to clink, and still the discussion showed no symptoms of coming to any conclusion. But when they had left their little supper-table, and had returned to their seats by the fire, the Chairman hammered himself into attention, and thus outspoke:—

“Gentlemen King Arthurs, when the night is so bad without, harmony should prevail within. When the moor is so windy, cold, and bleak, this room should be cheerful, convivial, and entertaining. Gentlemen, at present it is neither the one nor yet the other, nor yet the other. Gentlemen King Arthurs, I recall you to yourselves. Gentlemen King Arthurs, what are you? You are inhabitants—old inhabitants—of the noble village of Lanrean. You are in council assembled. You are a monthly Club through all the winter months, and they are many. It is your perroud perrivilege, on a new member's entrance, or on a member's birthday, to call upon that member to make good his footing by relating to you some transaction or adventure in his life, or in the life of a relation, or in the

life of a friend, and then depute me as your representative to spin a tectotum to pass it round. Gentlemen King Arthurs, your perroud perrivileges shall not suffer in my keeping. N—no! Therefore, as the member whose birth-day the present occasion has the honor to be has gratified you, and as the seafaring man overhead has *not* gratified you, I start you fresh, by spinning the tectotum attached to my office, and calling on the gentleman it falls to to speak up when his name is declared.”

The captain and his young friend looked hard at the tectotum as it whirled rapidly, and harder still when it gradually became intoxicated and began to stagger about the table in an ill-conducted and disorderly manner. Finally it came into collision with a candlestick, and leaped against the pipe of the old gentleman with the flapping shirt-collars. Thereupon the chairman struck the table once with his hammer and said, —

“Mr. Parvis!”

“D’ye hear that?” whispered the captain, greatly excited, to the young fisherman. “I’d have laid you a thousand dollars a good half-hour ago, that that old cherubim in the clouds was Arson Parvis!”

The respectable personage in question, after turning up one eye to assist his memory, — at which time he bore a very striking resemblance indeed to the conventional representations of his race as executed in oil by various ancient masters, — commenced a narrative, of which the interest centred in a waistcoat. It appeared that the waistcoat was a yellow waistcoat with a green stripe, white sleeves, and a plain brass button. It also appeared that the waistcoat was made to order, by Nicholas Pendold of Penzance, who was thrown off the top of a four-horse coach coming down the hill on the Plymouth road, and, pitching on his head where he was not sensitive, lived two-and-thirty years afterward, and considered himself the better for the accident, — roused up, as it might be. It further appeared that the waistcoat belonged to Mr. Parvis’s father, and had once attended him, in company with a pair of gaiters, to the annual feast of miners at St. Just; where the extraordinary circumstances which ever afterward rendered it a waistcoat famous in story had occurred. But the celebrity of the waistcoat was

not thoroughly accounted for by Mr. Parvis, and had to be to some extent taken on trust by the company, in consequence of that gentleman's entirely forgetting all about the extraordinary circumstance that had handed it down to fame. Indeed, he was even unable, on a gentle cross-examination instituted for the assistance of his memory, to inform the Gentlemen King Arthurs whether it was a circumstance of a natural or a supernatural character. Having thus responded to the teetotum, Mr. Parvis, after looking out from his clouds as if he would like to see the man who would beat that, subsided into himself.

The fraternity were plunged into a blank condition by Mr. Parvis's success, and the chairman was about to try another spin, when Young Raybrock — whom Captain Jorgan had with difficulty restrained — rose, and said might he ask Mr. Parvis a question.

The Gentlemen King Arthurs holding, with loud cries of "Order!" that he might not, he asked the question as soon as he could possibly make himself heard.

Did the forgotten circumstance relate in any way to money? To a sum of money, such as five hundred pounds? To money supposed by its possessor to be honestly come by, but in reality ill-gotten and stolen?

A general surprise seized upon the club when this remarkable inquiry was preferred; which would have become resentment but for the captain's interposition.

"Strange as it sounds," said he, "and suspicious as it sounds, I pledge myself, gentlemen, that my young friend here has a manly, stand-up Cornish reason for his words. Also, I pledge myself that they are inoffensive words. He and I are searching for information on a subject which those words generally describe. Such information we may get from the honestest and best of men, — may get, or not get, here or anywhere about here. I hope the Honorable Mr. Arson — I ask his pardon — Parvis — will not object to quiet my young friend's mind by saying Yes or No."

After some time, the obtuse Mr. Parvis was with great trouble and difficulty induced to roar out "No!" For which concession the captain rose and thanked him.

"Now, listen to the next," whispered the captain to the young fisherman. "There may be more in him than

in the other crittur. Don't interrupt him. Hear him out."

The chairman with all due formality spun the tectotum, and it reeled into the brandy-and-water of a strong, brown man of sixty or so, — John Tredgear, the manager of a neighboring mine. He immediately began as follows, with a plain, business-like air that gradually warmed as he proceeded : —

"It happened that at one period of my life the path of my destiny (not a tin path then) lay along the highways and by-ways of France, and that I had occasion to make frequent stoppages at common French roadside cabarets, — that kind of tavern which has a very bad name in French books and French plays. I had engaged myself in an undertaking which rendered such journeys necessary. A very old friend of mine had recently established himself at Paris in a wholesale commercial enterprise, into the nature of which it is not necessary for our present purpose to enter. He had proposed to me a certain share in the undertaking, and one of the duties of my post was to involve occasional journeys among the smaller towns and villages of France, with the view of establishing agencies and opening connections. My friend had applied to me to undertake this function, rather than to a native, feeling that he could trust me better than a stranger. He knew, also, that, in consequence of my having been half of my life at school in France, my knowledge of the language would be sufficient for every purpose that could be required.

I accepted my friend's proposal, and entered with such energy as I could command upon my new mode of life. Sometimes my journeyings from place to place were accomplished by means of the railroad, or other public conveyance ; but there were other occasions, and these last I liked the best, when it was necessary I should go to out-of-the-way places, and by such cross-roads as rendered it more convenient for me to travel with a carriage and horse of my own. My carriage was a kind of phaeton without a coach-box, with a leather hood that would put up and down ; and there was plenty of room at the back for such specimens or samples of goods as it

was necessary that I should carry with me. For my horse, — it was absolutely indispensable that it should be an animal of some value, as no horse but a very good one would be capable of performing the long courses, day after day, which my mode of travelling rendered necessary. He cost me two thousand francs, and was anything but dear at the price.

Many were the journeys we performed together over the broad acres of beautiful France. Many were the hotels, many the auberges, many the bad dinners, many the damp beds, and many the fleas which I encountered en route. Many were the dull old fortified towns, over whose drawbridges I rolled; many the still more dull old towns without fortifications and without drawbridges, at which my avocations made it necessary for me to halt.

I don't know how it was that on the morning when I was to start from the town of Doulaise, with the intention of sleeping at Francy-le-Grand, I was an hour later in commencing my journey than I ought to have been. I have said I don't know how it was, but this is scarcely true. I do know how it was. It was because on that morning, to use a popular expression, everything went wrong. So it was an hour later than it ought to have been, gentlemen, when I drew up the sheep-skin lining of my carriage-apron over my legs, and, establishing my little dog comfortably on the seat beside me, set off on my journey. In all my expeditions I was accompanied by a favorite terrier of mine, which I had brought with me from England. I never travelled without her, and found her a companion.

It was a miserable day in the month of October. A perfectly gray sky, with white gleams about the horizon, gave unmistakable evidence that the small drizzle which was falling would continue for four-and-twenty hours at least. It was cold and cheerless weather, and on the deserted road I was pursuing there was scarcely a human being (unless it was an occasional cantonnier, or road-mender) to break the solitude. A deserted way indeed, with poplars on each side of it, which had turned yellow in the autumn, and had shed their leaves in abundance all across the road, so that my mare's footsteps had quite a muffled sound as she trampled them under her hoofs.

Widely extended flats spread out on either side till the view was lost in an inconceivably melancholy scene, and the road itself was so perfectly straight, that you could see something like ten miles of it diminishing to a point in front of you, while a similar view was visible through the little window at the back of the carriage.

In the hurry of the morning's departure, I had omitted to inquire, as I generally did in travelling an unknown road, at what village it would be best for me to stop, about noon, to bait, and what was the name of the most respectable house of public entertainment in my way; so that when I arrived, between twelve and one o'clock, at a certain place where four roads met, and when, at one of the corners formed by their union, I saw a great bare-looking inn, with the sign of the Tête Noire swinging in front, I had nothing for it but to put up there, without knowing anything of the character of the house.

The look of the place did not please me. It was a great, bare, uninhabited-looking house, which seemed much larger than was necessary, and presented a black and dirty appearance, which, considering the distance from any town, it was difficult to account for. All the doors and all the windows were shut; there was no sign of any living creature about the place; and niched into the wall above the principal entrance was a grim and ghastly-looking life-size figure of a saint. For a moment I hesitated whether I should turn into the open gates of the stable-yard, or go farther in search of some more attractive halting-place. But my mare was tired, I was more than half-way on my road, and this would be the best division of the journey. Besides, gentlemen, why *not* put up here? If I was only going to stop at such places of entertainment as completely satisfied me, externally as well as internally, I had better give up travelling altogether.

There were no more signs of life in the interior of the yard than were presented by the external aspect of the house as it fronted the road. Everything seemed shut up. All the stables and out-houses were characterized by closed doors, without so much as a straw clinging to their thresholds to indicate that these buildings were sometimes put to a practical use. I saw no manure

strewed about the place, and no living creature ; no pigs, no ducks, no fowls. It was perfectly still and quiet, and as it was one of those days when a fine small rain descends quite straight, without a breath of air to drive it one way or the other, the silence was complete and distressing. I gave a loud shout, and began undoing the harness while my summons was taking effect.

The first person whom the sound of my voice appeared to have reached was a small but precocious boy, who opened a door in the back of the house, and descending the flight of steps which led to it, approached to aid me in my task. I was just undoing the final buckle on my side of the harness, when, happening to turn round, I discovered, standing close behind me, a personage who had approached so quietly that it would have been a confusing thing to find him so near, even if there had been nothing in his appearance which was calculated to startle one. He was the most ill-looking man, gentlemen, that it was ever my fortune to behold. Nearer fifty than any other age I could give him, his dry, spare nature had kept him as light and active as a restless boy. An absence of flesh, however, was not the only want I felt to exist in the personal appearance of the landlord of the Tête Noire. There was a much more serious defect in him than this. A want of any hint of mercy, or conscience, or any accessible approach to the better side (if there was a better side) of the man's nature. When first I looked at his eyes, as he stood behind me in the open court, and as they rapidly glanced over the comely points of my horse, and thence to the packages inside my carriage, and the portmanteau strapped on in front of it, — at that time the color of his eyes appeared to me to be of an almost orange tinge ; but when, a minute afterward, we stood together in the dark stable, I noted that a kind of blue phosphorescence gleamed upon their surface, veiling their real hue, and imparting to them a tigerish lustre. The moment when I remarked this, by the by, was when the organs I have been describing were fixed upon the very large gold ring which I had not ceased to wear when I adopted* my adventurous life, and which you may see upon my finger now. There were two other things about this man that struck me.

These were a bald red-projecting lump of flesh at the back of his head, and a deep scar, which a scrap of frowzy whisker on his cheek wholly declined to conceal.

"A nasty day for a journey of pleasure," said the landlord, looking at me with a satirical smile.

"Perhaps it is *not* a journey of pleasure," I answered, dryly.

"We have few such travellers on the road now," said the evil-faced man. "The railroads make the country a desert, and the roads are as wild as they were three hundred years ago."

"They are well enough," I answered, carelessly, "for those who are obliged to travel by them. Nobody else, I should think, would be likely to make use of them."

"Will you come into the house?" said the landlord, abruptly, looking me full in the face.

I never felt a stronger repugnance than I entertained toward the idea of entering this man's doors. Yet what other course was open to me? My mare was already half through the first instalment of her oats, so there was no more excuse for remaining in the stable. To take a walk in the drenching rain was out of the question, and to remain sitting in my calèche would have been a worse indication of suspicion and mistrust. Besides, I had had nothing since the morning's coffee, and I wanted something to eat and drink. There was nothing to be done, then, but to accept my ill-looking friend's offer. He led the way up the flight of steps which gave access to the interior of the building.

The room in which I found myself on passing through the door at the top of these steps was one of those rooms which an excess of light not only fails to enliven, but seems even to invest with an additional degree of gloom. There is *sometimes* this character about light, and I have seen before now a workhouse ward, and a barren schoolroom, which have owed a good share of their melancholy to an immoderate amount of cold, gray daylight. This room, then, into which I was shown, was one of those which, on a wet day, seemed several degrees lighter than the open air. Of course it could not be really lighter than the thing that lit it, but it seemed so. It also appeared larger than the whole out-door world;

and this, certainly, could not be, either, but seemed so. Vast as it was, there appeared through two glass doors in one of the walls another apartment of similar dimensions. It was not a square room, nor an oblong room, but was smaller at one end than at the other; a phenomenon which, as you have very likely observed, gentlemen, has always an unpleasant effect. The billiard-table, which stood in the middle of the apartment, though really of the usual size, looked quite a trifling piece of furniture; and as to the other tables, which were planted sparingly here and there for purposes of refreshment, they were quite lost in the immensity of space about them. A cupboard, a rack of billiard cues, a marking-board, and a print of the murder of the Archbishop of Paris, in a black frame, alone broke the uniformity of wall. The ceiling, as far as one could judge of anything at that altitude, appeared to be traversed by an enormous beam with rings fastened into it adapted for suicidal purposes, and splashed with the whitewash with which the ceiling itself and the walls had just been decorated. Even my little terrier, whom I had been obliged to take up in my arms on account of the disposition she had manifested to fly at the shins of our detested landlord, looked round the room with a gaze of horror as I set her down, and trembled and shivered as if she would come out of her skin.

“And so you don’t like him, Nelly, and your little beads of eyes, that look up at me from under that hairy pent-house, with nothing but love in them, are all ablaze with fury when they are turned upon his sinister face? And how did he get that scar, Nelly? Did he get it when he slaughtered his last traveller? And what do you think of his eyes, Nelly? And what do you think of the back of his head, my dog? What do you think he’s about now, eh? What mischief do you think he’s hatching? Don’t you wish you were sitting by my side in the calèche, and that we were out on the free road again?”

To all these questions and remarks, my little companion responded very intelligibly by faint thumpings of the ground with her tail, and by certain flutterings of her ears, which, from long habits of intercourse, I understood

very well to mean that whatever my opinion might be she coincided in it.

I had ordered an omelet and some wine when I first entered the house, and, as I now sat waiting for it, I observed that my landlord would every now and then leave what he was about in the other room — where I concluded that he was engaged preparing my meal — and would come and peer at me furtively through the glass doors which connected the room I was in with that in which he was. Once, too, I heard him go out, and I felt sure that he had retired to the stables, to examine more minutely the value of my horse and carriage.

I took it into my head that my landlord was a desperate rogue; that his business was not sufficient to support him; that he had remarked that I was in possession of a very valuable horse and carriage, which would fetch something, and a quantity of luggage in which there were probably articles of price. I had other things of worth about my person, including a sum of money, without which I could not be travelling about, as he saw me, from place to place.

While my mind was amusing itself with these cheerful reflections a little girl, of about twelve years old, entered the room through the glass doors, and, after honoring me with a long stare, went to the cupboard at the other end of the apartment, and, opening it with a bunch of keys which she brought with her in her hand, took out a small, white paper packet, about four inches square, and retired with it by the way by which she had entered; still staring at me so diligently that, from want of proper attention to where she was going, she got (I am happy to state) a severe bump against the door as she passed through it. She was a horrid little girl this, with eyes that in shirking the necessity of looking straight at anybody or any thing, had got at last to look only at her nose, — finding it, probably, as bad a nose as could be met with, and therefore a congenial companion. She had, moreover, frizzy and fluey hair, was excessively dirty, and had a slow, crab-like way of going along without looking at what she was about, which was very noisome and detestable.

It was not long before this young lady reappeared,

bearing in her hand a plate containing the omelet, which she placed upon the table without going through the previous form of laying a cloth. She next cut an immense piece of bread from a loaf shaped like a ring, and, having clapped this also down upon the dirtiest part of the table, and having further favored me with a wiped knife and fork, disappeared once more. She disappeared to fetch the wine. When this had been brought, and some water, the preparations for my feast were considered complete, and I was left to enjoy it alone.

I must not omit to mention that the horrid waiting-maid appeared to excite as strong an antipathy in the breast of my little dog as that which my landlord himself had stirred up; and, I am happy to say, that, as the child left the room, I was obliged to interfere to prevent Nelly from harassing her retreating calves.

Gentlemen, an experienced traveller soon learns that he must eat to support nature; closing his eyes, nose, and ears to all suggestions. I set to work then at the omelet with energy, and at the tough, sour bread with good-will, and had swallowed half a tumbler of wine and water, when a thought suddenly occurred to me which caused me to set the glass down upon the table. I had no sooner done this than I raised it again to my lips, took a fresh sip, rolled the liquid about in my mouth two or three times, and spat it out upon the floor. But I uttered, as I did so, in an audible tone, the monosyllable "Pooh!"

"Pooh! Nelly," I said, looking down at my dog, who was watching me intensely with her head on one side,— "pooh! Nelly," I repeated, "what frantic and inconceivable nonsense!"

And what was it that I thus stigmatized? What was it that had given me pause in the middle of my draught? What thought was it that caused me to set down my glass with half its contents remaining in it? It was a suspicion, driven straight and swift as an arrow into the innermost recesses of my soul, that the wine I had just been drinking, and which, contrary to my custom, I had mingled with water, was drugged!

There are some thoughts which, like noxious insects, come buzzing back into one's mind as often as we repulse them. We confute them in argument, prove them illogi-

cal, leave them not a leg to stand upon, and yet there they are the next moment as brisk as bees, and stronger on their pins than ever. It was just such a thought as this with which I had now to deal. It was well to say "Pooh!" It was well to remind myself that this was the nineteenth century, that I was not acting a part in a French melodrama, that such things as I was thinking of were only known in romances; it was well to argue that to set a respectable man down as a murderer, because he had peculiar-colored eyes, and a scar upon his cheek, were ridiculous things to do. There seemed to be two separate parties within me, — one possessed of great powers of argument and a cool judgment; the other, an irrational or opposition party, whose chief force consisted in a system of dogged assertion which all the arguments of the rational party were insufficient to put down.

It was not long before an additional force was imparted to the tactics of the irrational party, by certain symptoms which began to develop themselves in my internal organization, and which seemed favorable to the view of the case I was so anxious to refute. In spite of all my efforts to the contrary, I could not help feeling that some very remarkable sensations were slowly and gradually stealing over me. First of all, I began to find that I was a little at fault in my system of calculating distances; so that when I took up any object and attempted to replace it on the table, I either brought it into contact with that article of furniture with a crash, in consequence of conceiving it to be lower than it was; or else, imagining that the table was several inches nearer to the ceiling than was the case, I abandoned whatever I held in my hand sooner than I should, and found that I was confiding it to space. Then, again, my head felt light upon my shoulders, there was a slight tingling in my hands, and a sense that they, as well as my feet (which were very cold) were swelling to gigantic size, and were also surrounded with numerous, rapidly revolving wheels of a light structure, like Catherine-wheels previous to ignition. It also appeared to me that when I spoke to my dog, my voice had a curious sound, and my words were very imperfectly articulated.

It would happen, too, that when I looked toward the

glass-doors, my landlord was there, peering at me through the muslin curtain; or the horrid little girl would enter with no obvious intention, and having loitered for a little time about the room, would leave it again. At length the landlord himself came in, and coolly walking up to the table at which I was seated, glanced at the hardly tasted wine before me.

"It would appear that the wine of the country is not to your taste," he said.

"It is good enough," I answered, as carelessly as I could; the words sounding to me as if they were uttered inside the cupola of St. Paul's, and were conveyed by iron tubes to the place I occupied.

I was in a strange state, — perfectly conscious, but imperfectly able to control my thoughts, my words, my actions. I believe my landlord stood staring down at me as I sat staring up at him, and watching the Catherine-wheels as they revolved round his eyes and nose and chin — gentlemen, they seemed absolutely to *fizz* when they got to the scar on his cheek.

At this time a noisy party entered the main room of the auberge, which I have described as being visible through the glass-doors, and the landlord had to leave me for a time to go and attend to them. I think I must have fallen into a slight and strongly resisted doze, and that when I started out of it it was in consequence of the violent barking of my terrier. The landlord was in the room; he was just unlocking the cupboard from which the little girl had taken the paper parcel. He took out just such another paper parcel, and returned again through the doors. As he did so, I remember stupidly wondering what had become of the little girl. Presently his evil face appeared again at the door.

"I am going to prepare the coffee," said the landlord; "perhaps monsieur will like it better than the wine."

As the man disappeared I started suddenly and violently upon my feet. I could deceive myself no longer. My thoughts were like lightning. "The wine having been taken in so small a quantity and so profusely mixed with water, has done its work (as this man can see) but imperfectly. The coffee will finish that work. He is now preparing it. The cupboard,

the little parcel — there can be no doubt I will leave this place while I yet can. Now or never ; if those men whose voices I hear in the other room leave the house, it will be too late. With so many witnesses no attempt can be made to prevent my departure. I *will* not sleep, — I *will* act, — I *will* force my muscles to their work, and get away from this place ”

Gentlemen, in compensation for a set of nerves of distressing sensitiveness, I have received from nature a remarkable power of controlling my nerves for a time. I staggered to the door, closing it after me more violently than I had intended, and descended — the fresh air making me feel very giddy — into the yard.

As I went down the steps I saw the truculent little girl of whom I have already spoken entering the yard, followed by a blacksmith, carrying a hammer and some other implements of his trade. Catching sight of me, the little girl spoke quickly to the blacksmith, and in an instant they both changed their course, which was directed toward the stable, and entered an outhouse on the other side of the yard. The thought entered my head that this man had been sent for to drive a nail into my horse's foot, so that in the event of the drugged wine failing I might still be unable to proceed. This horrible idea added new force to my exertions. I seized the shafts of my carriage and commenced dragging it out of the yard and round to the front of the house ; feeling that if it was once in the highway there would be less possibility of offering any impediment to my starting. I am conscious of having fallen twice to the ground in my struggles to get the carriage out of the yard. Next I hastened to the stable. My mare was still harnessed, with the exception of the headstall. I managed to get the bit into her mouth, and dragged her to the place where I had left the carriage. After I know not how many efforts to place the docile beast in the shafts — for I was as incapable of calculating distances as a drunken man — I recollect, but how I know not, securing the assistance of the boy I had seen. I was making a final effort to fasten the trace to its little pin, when a voice behind me said, —

“ Are you going away without drinking your coffee ? ”

I turned round and saw my landlord standing close

beside me. He was watching my bungling efforts to secure the harness, but he made no movement to assist me.

"I do not want any coffee," I answered.

"No coffee, and no wine! It would appear that the gentleman is not a great drinker. You have not given your horse much of a rest," he added, presently.

"I am in haste. What have I to pay?"

"You will take something else," said the landlord; "a glass of brandy before starting in the wet?"

"No, nothing more. What have I to pay?"

"You will at least come in for an instant, and warm your feet at the stove?"

"No. Tell me at once how much I am to pay."

Baffled in all his efforts to get me again into the house, my detested landlord had nothing for it but to answer my demand.

"Four litres of oats," he muttered, "a half-truss of hay, breakfast, wine, coffee," — he emphasized the last two words with a malignant grin, — "seven francs fifty centimes."

My mare was by this time somehow or other buckled into the shafts, and now I had to get out my purse to pay this demand. My hands were cold, my head was giddy, my sight was dim, and, as I brought out my purse (which was a *porte-monnaie*, opening with a hinge), I managed while paying the bill to turn the purse over and to drop some gold pieces.

"Gold!" cried the boy who had been helping me to harness the horse, speaking as if by an irresistible impulse.

The landlord made a sudden dart at it, but instantly checked himself.

"People want plenty of gold," he said, "when they make a journey of pleasure."

I felt myself getting worse. I could not pick up the gold pieces as they lay on the ground. I fell on my knees, and my head bowed forward. I could not hit the place where a coin lay; I could see it, but I could not guide my fingers to it. Still I did not yield. I got some of the money up, and the stable-boy, who was very officious in assisting me, gave me one or two pieces, — to this day I don't know how many he kept. I cast a hasty

glance, and seeing no more gold on the ground, raised myself by a desperate effort, and scrambled to my place in the carriage. I shook the reins instinctively, and the mare began to move.

The well-trained beast was beginning to trot away as cleverly as usual, when a thought suddenly flashed into my brain, as will sometimes happen when we are just going to sleep, — a thought which woke me up like a pistol-shot, and caused me to spring forward and gather up the reins so violently as almost to bring the mare back upon her haunches.

“My dog, my dear little Nelly!” I had left her behind!

To abandon my little favorite was a thing that never entered my head. “No, I must return. I must go back to the horrible place I have just escaped from. He has seen my gold, too, now,” I said to myself as I turned my horse’s head with many clumsy efforts; “the men who were drinking in the auberge are gone; and, what is worse than all, I feel more under the influence of the drugs I have swallowed.”

As I approached the auberge once more I remember noticing that its walls looked blacker than ever, that the rain was falling more heavily, that the landlord and the stable-boy were on the steps of the inn, evidently on the look-out for me. One thing more I noticed, — on the road a small speck, as of some vehicle nearing the place.

“I have come back for my dog,” said I.

“I know nothing of your dog.”

“It is false! I left her shut up in the inner room.”

“Go there and find her then,” retorted the man, throwing off all disguise.

“I will,” was my answer.

I knew it was a trap to get me into the house; I knew I was lost if I entered it; but I did not care. I descended from the carriage, I clambered up the steps with the aid of the balusters, I heard the barking of my little Nelly as I passed through the outer room and approached the glass doors, steadying myself as I went by the articles of furniture in the room. I burst the doors open, and my favorite bounded into my arms.

And now I felt that it was too late. As I approached

the door that opened to the road, I saw my carriage being led round to the back of the house, and the form of the landlord appeared in the door-way blocking up the passage. I made an effort to push past him, but it was useless. My little Nelly fell out of my arms on the steps outside; the landlord slammed the door heavily; and I fell without sense or knowledge at his feet.

* * * * *

It was dark, gentlemen, — dark, and very cold. The little patch of sky I was looking up at had in it a marvellous number of stars, which would have looked bright but for a blazing planet which seemed to eclipse, in the absence of the moon, all the other luminaries round about it. To lie thus was, in spite of the cold, quite a luxurious sensation. As I turned my head to ease it a little (for it seemed to have been in this position some time), I felt stiff and weak.

At this moment, too, I feel a stirring close beside me, and first a cold nose touching my hand, and then a hot tongue licking it. As to my other sensation, I was aware of a gentle rumbling sound, and could feel that I was being carried slowly along, and that every now and then there was a slight jolt; one of which, perhaps more marked than the rest, might be the cause of my being awake at all.

Presently other matters began to dawn upon my mind through the medium of my senses. I could see the regular movement of a horse's ears walking in front of me; surely I saw, too, part of the figure of a man, — a pair of sturdy shoulders, the hood of a coat, and a head with a wide-awake hat upon it. I could hear the occasional sounds of encouragement which seemed to emanate from this figure, and which were addressed to the horse. I could hear the tinkling of bells upon the animal's neck. Surely, too, I heard a rumbling sound behind us, and the tread of a horse's feet, — just as if there were another vehicle following close upon us. Was there anything more? Yes, in the distance I was able to detect the twinkling of a light or two, as if a town were not far off.

Now, gentlemen, as I lay and observed all these things, there was such a languor shed over my spirits, such a sense of utter, but not unpleasant weakness, that I hardly

cared to ask myself what it all meant, or to inquire where I was or how I came there. A conviction that all was well with me lay like an anodyne upon my heart, and it was only slowly and gradually that any curiosity as to how I came to be so, developed itself in my brain. I dare say we had been jogging along for a quarter of an hour, during which I had been perfectly conscious, before I struggled up into a sitting posture, and recognized the hooded back of the man at the horse's head.

"Dufay?"

The man with the hooded coat, who was walking by the side of the horse, suddenly cried out "Wo!" in a sturdy voice; then ran to the back of the carriage and cried out "Wo!" again; and then we came to a standstill. In another moment he had mounted on the step of the carriage, and had taken me cordially by the hand.

"What," he said, "awake at last? Thank Heaven! I had almost begun to despair of you."

"My dear friend, what does all this mean? Where am I? Where did you come from? This is not my calèche, that is not my horse."

"Both are safe behind," said Dufay, heartily; "and having told you so much, I will not utter another word till you are safe and warm at the Lion d'Or. See! There are the lights of the town. Now, not another word." And, pulling the horse-cloth under which I was lying more closely over me, my friend dismounted from the step, started the vehicle with the customary cry, of "Allons donc!" and a crack of the whip, and we were soon once more in motion.

Castaing Dufay was a man into whose company circumstances had thrown me very often, and with whom I had become intimate from choice. Of the numerous class to which he belonged, those men whose sturdy vehicles and sturdier horses are to be seen standing in the yards and stables of all the inns in provincial France, — the class of the *commis-voyageurs*, or French commercial travellers, — Castaing Dufay was more than a favorable specimen. I was very fond of him. In the course of our intimacy I had been fortunate enough to have the opportunity of being useful to him in matters of

some importance. I think, gentlemen, we like those we have served quite as well as they like us.

The town lights were, indeed, close by, and it was not long before we turned into the yard of the *Lion d'Or*, and found ourselves in the midst of warmth and brightness, and surrounded by faces which, after the dangers I had passed through, looked perfectly angelic.

I had no idea, till I attempted to move, how weak and dazed I was. I was too far gone for dinner. A bed and a fire were the only things I coveted, and I was soon in possession of both.

I was no sooner snugly ensconced with my head on the pillow, watching the crackling logs as they sparkled, — my little Nelly lying outside the counterpane, — than my friend seated himself beside me, and volunteered to relieve my curiosity as to the circumstance of my escape from the *Tête Noire*. It was now my turn to refuse to listen, as it had been his before to refuse to speak.

"Not one word," I said, "till you have had a good dinner, after which you will come up and sit beside me, and tell me all I am longing to know. And stay, — you will do one thing more for me, I know; when you come up you will bring a plateful of bones for Nelly; she will not leave me to-night, I swear, to save herself from starving."

"She deserves some dinner," said Dufay, as he left the room, "for I think it is through her instrumentality that you are alive at this moment."

The bliss in which I lay after Dufay had left the room is known only to those who have passed through some great danger, or who, at least, are newly relieved from some condition of severe and protracted suffering. It was a state of perfect repose and happiness.

When my friend came back, he brought, — not only a plate of fowl-bones for Nelly, but a basin of soup for me. When I had finished lapping it up, and while Nelly was still crunching the bones, Dufay spoke as follows: —

"I said just now that it was to your little dog you owe the preservation of your life, and I must now tell you how it was. You remember that you left *Doulaise* this morning —"

"It seems a week ago," I interrupted.

"This morning," continued Dufay. "Well! You were hardly out of the inn-yard before I drove into it, having made a small stage before breakfast. I heard where you were gone, and, as I was going that way too, I determined to give my horse a rest of a couple of hours, while I breakfasted and transacted some business in the town, and then to set off after you. 'Have you any idea,' I said, as I left the inn at Doulaise, 'whether monsieur meant to stop en route, and if so, where?' The garçon did not know. 'Let me see,' I said, 'the Tête Noire at Mauconseil would be a likely place, would n't it?' 'No,' said the boy; 'the house does not enjoy a good character, and no one from here ever stops there.' 'Well,' said I, thinking no more of what he said, 'I shall be sure to find him. I will inquire after him as I go along.'

"The afternoon was getting on when I came within sight of the inn of the Tête Noire. As you know, I am a little near-sighted, but I saw, as I drew near the auberge, that a conveyance of some kind was being taken round to the yard at the back of the house. This circumstance, however, I should have paid no attention to, had not my attention been suddenly caught by the violent barking of a dog, which seemed to be trying to gain admittance at the closed door of the inn. At a second glance I knew the dog to be yours. Pulling up my horse, I got down and ascended the steps of the auberge. One sniff at my shins was enough to convince Nelly that a friend was at hand, and her excitement as I approached the door was frantic.

"On my entering the house I did not at first see you, but on looking in the direction toward which your dog had hastened as soon as the door was opened, I saw a dark wooden staircase, which led out of one corner of the apartment I was standing in. I saw, also, that you, my friend, were being dragged up the stairs in the arms of a very ill-looking man, assisted by (if possible) a still more ill-looking little girl, who had charge of your legs. At sight of me the man deposited you upon the stairs, and advanced to meet me.

"'What are you doing with that gentleman?' I asked.

“ ‘He is unwell,’ replied the ill-looking man, ‘and I am helping him up stairs to bed.’

“ ‘That gentleman is a friend of mine. What is the meaning of his being in this state?’

“ ‘How should I know?’ was the answer; ‘I am not the guardian of the gentleman’s health.’

“ ‘Well, then, I *am*,’ said I, approaching the place where you were lying; ‘and I prescribe, to begin with, that he shall leave this place at once.’

“ ‘I must own,’ continued Dufay, ‘that you were looking horribly ill, and as I bent over and felt your hardly fluttering pulse, I felt for a moment doubtful whether it was safe to move you. However, I determined to risk it.

“ ‘Will you help me,’ I said, ‘to move this gentleman to his carriage?’

“ ‘No,’ replied the ruffian, ‘he is not fit to travel. Besides, what right have you over him?’

“ ‘The right of being his friend.’

“ ‘How do I know that?’

“ ‘Because I tell you so. See, his dog knows me.’

“ ‘And suppose I decline to accept that as evidence, and refuse to let this gentleman leave my house in his present state of health?’

“ ‘You dare not do it.’

“ ‘Why?’

“ ‘Because,’ I answered, slowly, ‘I should go to the Gendarmerie in the village, and mention under what suspicious circumstances I found my friend here, and because your house has not the best of characters.’

“ ‘The man was silent for a moment, as if a little baffled. He seemed, however, determined to try once more.

“ ‘And suppose I close my doors, and decline to let either of you go; what is to prevent me?’

“ ‘In the first place,’ I answered, ‘I will effectually prevent your detaining me single-handed. If you have assistance near, I am expected to-night at Francy, and if I do not arrive there, I shall soon be sought out. It was known that I left Doulaise this morning, and most people are aware that there is an auberge on the road which does not bear the best of reputations, and that its name is *La Tête Noire*. Now will you help me?’

“ ‘No,’ replied the savage. ‘I will have nothing to do with the affair.’ ”

“ It was not an easy task to drag you without assistance from the place where you were lying, out into the open air, down the steps, and to put you into my conveyance, which was standing outside ; but I managed to do it. The next thing I had to accomplish was the feat of driving two carriages and two horses single-handed. I could see only one way of managing this. I led my own horse round to the gate of the stable-yard, where I could keep my eye upon him, while I went in search of your horse and carriage, which I had to get right without assistance. It was done at last. I fastened your horse’s head by a halter to the back of my carriage, and then, leading my own beast by the bridle, I managed to start the procession. And so (though only at a foot-pace) we turned our backs upon the Tête Noire. And now you know everything.”

“ I feel, Castaing, as if I should never be able to think of this adventure, or to speak of it again. It wears, somehow or other, such a ghastly aspect, that I sicken at the mere memory of it.”

“ Not a bit of it,” said Dufay, cheerily ; “ you will live to tell it as a stirring tale some winter night, take my word for it.”

Gentlemen, the prediction is verified. May the tectotum fall next time with more judgment !

“ Wa’al, now ! ” said Captain Jorgan, rising, with his hand upon the sleeve of his fellow-traveller to keep him down ; “ I congratulate you, sir, upon that adventer ; unpleasant at the time, but pleasant to look back upon, as many adventers in many lives are. Mr. Tredgear, you had a feeling for your money on that occasion, and it went hard on being Stolen Money. It was not a sum of five hundred pound, perhaps ? ”

“ I wish it had been half as much,” was the reply.

“ Thank you, sir. Might I ask the question of you that has been already put ? About this place of Lan-rean did you ever hear of any circumstances whatever that might seem to have a bearing — anyhow — on that question ? ”

“Never.”

“Thank you again for a straightfor’ard answer,” said the captain, apologetically. “You see, we have referred to Lanrean to make inquiries, and happening in among the inhabitants present, we use the opportunity. In my country we always *do* use opportunities.”

“And you turn them to good account, I believe, and prosper?”

“It ’s a fact, sir,” said the captain, “that we get along. Yes, we get along, sir. — But I stop the teetotum.”

It was twirled again, and fell to David Polreath, — an iron-gray man; “as old as the hills,” the captain whispered to Young Raybrock, “and as hard as nails. And I admire,” added the captain, glancing about, “whether Unchris’en Penrewen is here, and which is he!”

David Polreath stroked down the long, iron-gray hair that fell massively upon the shoulders of his large-buttoned coat, and spake thus:—

The question was, Did he throw himself over the cliff of set purpose, or did he lose his way in the dusk and fall over accidentally, or was he pushed over by some person or persons unknown?

His body was found nearly fifty yards below the fall, caught in the low branches of the trees that overhang the water at the foot of the track down the cliff. It was shockingly bruised and disfigured, so much so as to be hardly recognizable; but for his clothing and the name on his linen I doubt whether anybody could have identified him except myself. There was, however, no suspicion of foul play; the signs of rough usage might all have been caused by the body having been driven about among the stones that encumber the bed of the river a long way below the fall.

When I speak of the fall, I speak of the Ashenfall, by Ashendell village, within an hour’s drive of this house. This, gentlemen, is for the information of strangers.

He had been seen by many persons about the village during the day; I myself had seen him go up the hill past the parsonage toward the church, — which I rather wondered at, considering who was buried there, and how,

and why I will even confess that I watched him ; and he went — as I expected he would, since he had the heart to go near the place at all — round to the back of the church where Honor Livingston's grave is ; and there he stayed, sitting by himself on the low wall for an hour or more. Sometimes he turned to look across the valley, — many a time and oft I had seen him there before, with Honor beside him, watching, while he sketched the beautiful landscape, — and sometimes he had his back to it, and his head down, as if he were watching her grave. Not that there is anything pleasant or comforting to read there, as on the graves of good Christian people who have died in their beds ; for, being a suicide, when they buried her on the north side of the church it was at dusk, and without any service, and, of course, no stone was allowed to be put up over it. Our clergyman has talked of having the mound levelled and turfed over, and I wish he would ; it always hurts me when I go up to Sunday service, to see that ragged grave lying in the shadow of the wall, for I remember the pretty little lass ever since she could run alone ; and though she was passionate, her heart was as good as gold. She had been religiously brought up, and I am quite sure in my own mind, let the coroner's inquest have said what it would, that she was out of herself, and Bedlam-mad when she did it.

The verdict on him was "accidental death," and he had a regular funeral, — priest, bell, clerk, and sexton, complete ; and there he lies, only a stone's-throw from Honor, with a ton or two of granite over him, and an inscription, setting forth what a great man he was in his day, and what mighty engineering works he did at home and abroad, and how he sleeps now in the hope of a joyful resurrection with the just made perfect. These present strangers can read it for themselves ; many strangers go up to look at it. His grave is as famous as the Ashen-fall itself, and I have known folks come away with tears in their eyes after reading the flourishing inscription ; believing it all like gospel, and saying how sad that so distinguished a man should have been cut off in the prime of his days. But I don't believe it. He was never any more than plain James Lawrence to me, — a

young fellow who, as a lad, had paddled bare-legged over the stones of the river as a guide across for visitors ; who had been taken a fancy to by one of them, and decently educated ; who had made the most of his luck, and done a clever thing or two in engineering ; who had come back among us in all his glory, to dazzle most people's eyes, and break little Honor Livingston's heart. The one good thing I know of him was, that he pensioned his poor old mother ; but he did not often come near her, and never after Honor Livingston was dead, — no, not even in her last illness. It was a marvel to everybody what brought him over here, when we saw him the day before he was found dead ; but it was his fate, and he could n't keep away. That is my view of it. About his death and the manner of it, all Lanrean had its speculation, and said its say ; but I held my peace. I had my opinion, however, and I keep it. I have never seen reason to change it ; but, on the contrary, I can show you evidence to establish it. I do not believe he either threw himself over the cliff, or fell over, or was pushed over ; no, I believe he was drawn over, — drawn over by something below. When you have heard the notes he made in a little book that was found among his things after he was dead, you will know what I mean. His cousin gave that book to me, knowing I am curious after odd stories of the neighborhood ; and what I am going to read, is written in his hand. I know his hand well, and certify to it.

PASSAGES FROM JAMES LAWRENCE'S JOURNAL.

LONDON, August 11, 1829.

Honor Livingston has kept her word with me. I saw her last night as plainly as I now see this pen I am writing with, and the ink-bottle I have just dipped it into. I saw her standing betwixt the two lights, looking at me, exactly as she looked the last time I saw her alive. I was neither asleep, nor dreaming awake. I had only drunk a couple of glasses of wine at dinner, and was as much my own man as ever I was in my life. It is all nonsense to talk about fancy and optical delusions in this case ; I saw her with my eyes as distinctly as I ever saw her alive in the body. The hall clock had just struck

eight, and it was growing dusk ; exactly the time of evening, as I well remember, when she came creeping round by the cottage wall, and saw me through the open window, gathering up my books and making ready to go away from Ashendell. She was the last thought to have come into my mind at that moment, for I was just on the point of lighting my cigar and going out for a stroll, before turning in at the Daltons to chat with Anne. All at once there she was, Honor herself ! I could have sworn it, had I not seen them put her under ground just a twelve-month ago. I could not take my eyes off her ; and there she stood, as nearly as I can tell, a minute, — but it may have been an hour, — and then the place she had filled was empty. I was so much bewildered and out of myself as it were, that for a while I could neither think of anything, nor hear anything, but the mad, heavy throbbing of my own pulses. I cannot say that I was scared exactly ; for the time I was completely rapt away ; the first actual sensation I had was of my own heart thumping in my breast like a sledge-hammer.

But I can call her up now and analyze her, — a wan, vague, misty outline, with Honor's own eyes full upon me. I can almost fancy I hear her asking again, "Is it true you're going, James ? You're not really going, James ?"

Now I am not the man to be frightened by a shadow, though that shadow be Honor Livingston, whom they say I as good as murdered. I always had a turn for investigating riddles, spiritual, physiological, and otherwise, and I shall follow this mystery up, and note whether she comes back to me year by year, as she promised. I have never kept a diary of personal matters before, not being one who cares to see spectres of himself at remote periods of his life, talking to him again of his adventures and misadventures out of yellow old pages that had better never have been written ; but this is a marked event worth commemorating, and a well-authenticated ghost-story to me who never believed in ghosts before.

It was a rather spiteful threat of Honor, — "I'll haunt you till you come to the Ashenfall, where I'm going now !" I might have stopped her, but it never entered my mind what she meant until it was done. I did not

expect she would make a tragedy of a little love-story ; she did not look like that sort of thing. She was no ghost, bless her ! in the flesh, but as round, rosy, dimpled little creature as one would wish to see ; and what could possess her to throw herself over the fall, Heaven only knows. Bah ! Yes, *I* know ; I need tell no lies here, I need not do any false swearing to myself, — the poor little creature loved me, and I wanted her to love me, and I petted and plagued her into loving me, because I was idle and I had the opportunity ; and then I had nothing better to tell her than that I was only in jest, — I could not marry her, for I was engaged to another woman. She would not believe it. That sounded to her more like jest than the other. And she did not believe it until she saw me making ready to go, and then, all in a moment, I suppose madness seized her, and she neither knew where she went nor what she did. I fancy I can see her now coming tripping down the fields leading her little brother by the hand, and I fancy I can see the saucy laugh she gave me over her shoulder as I asked her if she had any ripe cherries to sell. She looked the very mischief with those pretty eyes, and I was taken rather aback when she said, “I know you, *Jemmy Lawrence*.” That was the beginning of it. Little Honor and her mother lived next door to mine, and she had not forgotten me though I had been full seven years away. I did not know her, the gypsy, but I must needs go in and see her that evening ; and so we went on until I asked her if she remembered when we went to dame-school together, and when she promised to be my little wife ? *If* she remembered ! Of course she did, every word of it, and more ; and she was so pretty, and the lanes in the summer were so pleasant that sometimes my fancy did play Anne Dalton false, and I believed I should like Honor better ; and I said more than I meant, and she took it all in the grand, serious manner.

I was not much to blame. I would not have injured her for the world ; she was as good a little soul as ever lived. Love and jealousy, as passions, seem to find their strong-holds under thatch. If *Phillis*, the milkmaid is disappointed, she drowns herself in the mill-pool ; if *Lady Clara* gets a cross of the heart, she indites alachry-

mose sonnet, and marries a gouty peer; if Colin's sweetheart smiles on Lubin, Colin loads his gun and shoots them both; if Sir Harry's fair flouts him, he whistles her down the wind, and goes a wooing elsewhere. Had little Honor been a fine lady she would be living still. O the pretty, demure lips, and the shy glances, and rosy blushes! When I saw Anne Dalton to-day I could not help comparing her frigid gentility with poor Honor. Anne loves herself better than she will ever love any man alive. But then I know she is the kind of wife to help a man up in the world, and that is the kind of wife for me.

Honor Livingston lying on her little bed, and her blind mother feeling her cold dead face! I wish I had never seen it. I would have given the world to keep away, but something compelled me to go in and look at her; and I did feel then as if I had killed her. Last night she was a shadowy essence of this drowned Ophelia and of her living self. She was like, yet unlike; but I knew it was Honor; and I suppose, if she has her will, wherever her restless spirit may be condemned to bide between whiles, — on the 10th of August she will always come back to me, and haunt me until I go to her.

HASTINGS, August 11, 1830.

Again! I had forgotten the day, — forgotten every thing about that wretched business of poor Honor Livingston when last night I saw her.

Anne and I were sitting together out in the veranda, talking of all sorts of commonplace things, — our neighbors' affairs, money, this, that, and the other, — the sea was looking beautiful, and I was on the point of proposing a row by moonlight, when Anne said, "How lovely the evenings are, James, in this place! Look at the sky over the down, how clear it is!" Turning my head, I saw Honor standing on the grass only a few paces off, her shadowy shape quite distinct against the reds and purples of the clouds.

Anne clutched my hand with a sudden cry, for she was looking at my face all the time, and asked me passionately what I saw. With that Honor was gone, and, passing my hand over my eyes, I put my wife off with an excuse

about a spasm at my heart. And, indeed, it was no lie to say so, for this visitation gave me a terrible shock.

Anne insisted on my seeing the doctor. "It must be something dreadful, if not dangerous, that could make you look in that way; you had an awful face, James, for a moment."

I begged her not to talk about it, assured her that it was a thing of very rare occurrence with me, and that there was no cure for it. But this did not pacify her, and this morning no peace could be had until Dr. Hutchinson was sent for and she had given the old gentleman her own account of me. He said he would talk to me by and by. And when he got me by myself, I cannot tell how it was, but he absolutely contrived to worm the facts out of me, and I was fool enough to let him do it. He looked at me very oddly, with a sort of suspicious scrutiny in his eye; but I understood him, and said, laughing, "No, doctor, no, there is nothing wrong here," tapping my forehead as I spoke.

"I should say not, except this fancy for seeing ghosts," replied he, dryly. But I perceived, all the time that he was with me, that I was the object of a furtive and carefully dissembled observation, which was excessively trying. I could with difficulty keep my temper under it, and I believe he saw the struggle.

I fancy he wanted to have some talk with Anne by herself, but I prevented that by never losing sight of him until he was safely off the premises. If he proposed a private interview while I was out alone, I prevented that, too, by immediately ordering Anne to pack up our traps, and coming back to town that very day. I have not been well since. I feel out of spirits, bored, worried, sick of everything. If the feeling does not leave me, in spite of all Anne may say, I shall take that offer to go to South America, and start by the next packet. I should like to see Dr. Hutchinson's face when he calls at our lodgings to visit his patient and finds the bird flown.

LONDON, August 20, 1830.

This wretched state of things does not cease. One day I feel in full, firm, clear possession of my soul, and the next, perhaps, I am hurried to and fro with the most

tormenting fancies. I see shadows of Honor wherever I turn, and she is no longer motionless as before, but beckons me with her hand until I tremble in every limb. My heart is sick almost to death. For three days now I have had no rest. I cannot sleep at nights for hideous dreams; and Anne watches me stealthily, I see, and never remains alone with me longer than she can help. I can perceive that she is afraid of me, and that she suspects something, without exactly knowing what. To-day she must needs suggest my seeing a doctor here, and when I replied I was going to South America, she told me I was not fit for it, in such a contemptuous tone of provocation that I lifted my hand and struck her. Then she quailed, and while shrinking under my eyes, she said, "James, your conduct is that of a madman!" Since then I know she sits with me in silent terror, longing to escape and find some one to listen to her grievances. But I shall keep strict ward that she does nothing of the kind. I will not have my foes of my own household, and no spying relatives shall come between us to put asunder those whom God has joined together.

ACAPULCO, March 17, 1831.

It is six months since I wrote the above. In the interval I have been miserably ill, grievously tormented both in mind and body; but now that I have got safely away from them all, with the Atlantic between myself and my wicked wife, whose conduct toward me I will never forgive, I can collect my powers of mind, and bend them again to my work. Burton came out in the same ship with me to engage in the same enterprise. After a few days' rest we intend setting out on our journey to the mining districts, where we are to act. My head feels perfectly light and clear, all my impressions are distinct and vivid again, and I can get through a hard day's close study without inconvenience. There was nothing but my miserable liver to blame, and when that was set right all my imaginary phantoms disappeared. Umphey said it had been coming on gradually for months, and that there was nothing at all extraordinary in my delusions; my diseased state was one always so attended, more or less. And Anne, in her cowardly malignity,

would have consigned me for life to a lunatic asylum ! It was Umpleby who saved me, and I have put his name down in my will for a handsome remembrance. As for Anne, she has chosen to return to her family, and they may keep her ; she will never see my face again, of my free will, as long as I live.

The picturesqueness of this place is not noteworthy in any high degree. The harbor is enclosed by a chain of mountains, and has two entrances formed by the island of Roquetta ; the castle of St. Diego commands the town and the bay, standing on a spur of the hills. Burton has been to and fro on his rambles ever since we landed ; but I find the heat too great for much exertion, and when we begin our journey into the interior I have need of all my forces ; therefore, better husband them now.

MEXICO, April 24, 1831.

We are better off here than we anticipated. Burton has found an old fellow-pupil engaged as engineering tutor in the School of Mines, and there are civilized amusements which we neither of us had any hope of finding. The city is full of ancient relics, and Burton is on foot exploring, day by day. I prefer the living interests of this strange place, and sometimes early in the morning I betake myself to the market-place and watch the Indians dress their stalls. No matter what they sell they decorate their shops with fresh herbs and flowers until they are sheltered under a bower of verdure. They display their fruit in open basket-work, laying the pears and raisins below, and covering them above with odorous flowers. An artist might make a pretty picture here when the Indians arrive at sunrise in their boats loaded with the produce of their floating gardens. Next week Burton, his friend, and I are to set out for the mines of Moran and Real del Monte. I should have preferred to delay our journey a while longer for reasons of my own, but Burton presses, and feels we have already delayed longer than enough.

MORAN, July 4, 1831.

I am sick of this place, but our business here is now on the verge of completion, and in a few days we start on our expedition to the mines of Guanamoto. The di-

rector, Burton, and myself are all of opinion that immense advantages are to be gained by improving the working of the mines, which is, at present, in a very defective condition. There is great mortality among the Indians who are the beasts of burden of the mines; they carry on their backs loads of metal of from two hundred and fifty to three hundred and fifty pounds at a time, ascending and descending thousands of steps, in files which contain old men of seventy and mere children. I have not been very well here, having had some return of old symptoms, but under proper treatment they dispersed; however, I shall be thankful to be on the move again.

PASCUARO, August 11, 1831.

Can any man evade his thoughts, impalpable curses sitting on his heart, mocking like fiends? I cannot evade mine. All yesterday I was haunted by a terrible anxiety and dread. At every turn, at every moment, I expected to see Honor Livingston appear before me, but I did not see her. The day and the night passed, and I was freed from that great horror, — how great I had not realized, until its hour had gone and left no trace. This morning I am myself again; my spirits revive; I have escaped my enemy, and have proved that it was, indeed, but a subtle emanation of my own diseased body and mind. But these thoughts, these troublesome, persistent thoughts, how combat them? Burton, very observant of me at all times, was yesterday watchful as an inquisitor; he said he hoped I was not going to have the frightful fever which is prevailing here, but I know he meant something else. I have not a doubt now that Anne and all that confederacy warned him before we set sail to beware of me, for I had been mad; that is the cursed lie they set abroad. Mad! All the world's mad, or on the way to it!

But if Honor had come back to me yesterday, we might have gone and have looked down together into hell, through the ovens of Jorulla. The missionaries cursed this frightful place generations since; and it is accursed if ever land was. Nothing more awful than this desolate, burning waste, which the seas could not quench. When I remember it and all I underwent yes-

terday, the confusion and horror return upon me again, and my brain swerves like the brain of a drunken man. I will write no more, — sufficient to record that the appointed time came and went, and Honor Livingston did not keep her word with me.

NEW ORLEANS, February, 1832.

I left Burton still in Mexico, and came here alone. His care and considerateness were more than I could put up with, and after two or three ineffectual remonstrances, we came to a violent rupture, and I determined to throw up my engagement, rather than carry it out in conjunction with such a man. There was no avoiding the quarrel. Was I to be tutored day by day, and the wine-bottle removed out of my reach? He dared to tell me that when I was cool, clear, — myself, in short, — there was no man my master in our profession; but that when I had drunk freely I was unmanageable as a lunatic! A lie, of course; but unscrupulous persecutors are difficult to circumvent. Anne's malice pursues me even here. When I was out yesterday, my footsteps were dogged pertinaciously wherever I went, and perhaps an account of my doings will precede me home; but if they do, I defy them all to do their worst.

ASHENDELL, August 9, 1839.

This old book turned up to-day, among some traps that have lain by in London all the years that I have spent, first in Spain and afterward in Russia. What fool's talk it is! but I suppose it was true at the time. I know I was in a wretched condition while I was in Mexico and in the States, but I have been sane enough and sound enough ever since the illness I had at Baltimore. To prove how little hold on me my ancient horrors have retained, I find myself at Ashendell in the very season of the year when Honor Livingston destroyed herself, — to-morrow is the anniversary of her death. So I take my enemy by the throat, and crush him! These fantastical maladies will not stand against a determined will. At Moscow, at Cherson, at Archangel, the 10th of August has come and gone, unmarked. Honor failed of her threat everywhere except at Lisbon. I saw her there

twice, just before we sailed. I saw her, when we were off that coast where we so nearly escaped wreck, rising and falling upon the waves. I saw her in London that day I appointed to see Anne. But I know what it means ; it means that I must put myself in Umpleby's hands for a few weeks, and that the shadows will forthwith vanish. Shadows they are, out of my own brain, and they take the shape of Honor because I have let her become a fixed idea in my mind. Yet it is very strange that the last time she appeared to me I heard her speak. I fancied she said that it was Almost time ; and then louder, " I 'll haunt you, James, until you come to the Ashenfall, where I am going now ! " And with that she vanished. Fancy plays strange tricks with us, and makes cowards of us almost as cleverly as conscience.

August 10.

I have had a very unpleasant impression on me all day. I wish I had resisted Linchley's persuasions more steadily. I ought never to have come down here again. The excitement of its miserable recollections is too much for me. The man at the inn called me by my name this morning, and said he recollected me, — looking up toward the church as he spoke. Damn him ! All day I seem to have been acting against my will. What should possess me to go there this afternoon ? Round about among the graves, until I came to the grassy hillock on the north side of the church where they buried Honor that night without a prayer. I sat down on the low wall, and looked across to the hills beyond the river, listening to the monotonous sing-song of the fall. I would give all I possess to-day to be able to tread back or to untread a score of the years of my life. It seems such a blank ; of all I planned and schemed how little have I accomplished ! Watching by Honor's grave, I fell to thinking of her. What had either of us done that we should be so wretched ? Is it part and parcel of the great injustice of life that some must suffer so signally while others escape ? The coarse grass is never cut at the north side of the church, nettles and brambles grow about the grave. Honor was mad, poor soul ! they might have given her a prayer for rest, if they were forbidden to believe she died

in hope. I prayed for her to-day, — more need, perhaps, to pray for myself, — and then there came a crazed whirl in my brain, and I set off to find Linchley. As I came down near the water, the fall sounded very tumultuous ; it was sultry hot, and I should have liked to turn down by the river, but I said, “ No, it is the 10th of August ! If I am to meet Honor Livingston to-day, I’ll not meet her by Ashenfall ! ” So I came home to our lodgings, to find that Linchley had gone over to Warfe, and had left a message that he should not return until to-morrow. I have the night before me alone ; it is not like an English night at all ; it is like the nights I remember at Cadiz, which always heralded a tremendous storm. And I think we shall have a storm here, too, before the morning.

Those were the last words James Lawrence ever wrote, gentlemen. Further than this no man can speak of his death ; it is plain to me that one of his mad fits was coming on before he left Lisbon ; that it grew and increased until he came here ; and that here it reached its climax, and urged him to his death. I believe in the ghosts James Lawrence saw, as I believe in the haunting power of any great misdeed that has driven a fellow-creature into deadly sin.

When David Polreath had finished, the chairman gave the teetotum such a swift and sudden twirl, to be beforehand with any interruption, that it twirled among all the glasses, and into all corners of the table, and finally flew off the table and lodged in Captain Jorgan’s waistcoat.

“ A kind of a judgment ! ” said the captain, taking it out. “ What’s to be done now ? I know no story, except Down-Easters, and *they* did n’t happen to myself, or any one of my acquaintance, and you could n’t enjoy ’em without going out of your minds first. And perhaps the company ain’t prepared to do that ? ”

The chairman interposed by rising and declaring it to be his perroud perrivilege to stop preliminary observations.

“ Wa’al,” said the captain, “ I defer to the President, which ain’t at all what they do in my country, where they lay into him, head, limbs, and body.” Here he slapped

his leg. "But I beg to ask a preliminary question. Colonel Polreath has read from a diary. Might I read from a pipe-light?"

The chairman requested explanation.

"The history of the pipe-light," said the captain, "is just this: that it's verses, and was made on the voyage home by a passenger I brought over. And he was a quiet crittur of a middle-aged man, with a pleasant countenance. And he wrote it on the head of a cask. And he was a most eternal time about it, tew. And he blotted it as if he had wrote it in a continual squall of ink. And then he took an indigestion, and I physicked him, for want of a better doctor. And then to show his liking for me he copied it out fair, and gave it to me for a pipe-light. And it ain't been lighted yet, and that's a fact."

"Let it be read," said the chairman.

"With thanks to Colonel Polreath for setting the example," pursued the captain, "and with apologies to the Honorable A. Parvis and the whole of the present company for this passenger's having expressed his mind in verses, — which he may have done along of bein' sea-sick, and he was very, — the pipe-light, unrolled, comes to this: —

We sit by the fire so wide and red,
With the dance of the young within,
Who have yet small learning of cold and dread,
And of sorrow no more than of sin;
Nor dream of a night on a sleepless bed
Of waves with their terrible wrecks o'erspread.

We sit round the hearth as red as gold,
And the legends beloved we tell,
How battles were won by the nobles bold,
Where hamlets of villains fell:
And we praise our God, while we cut the bread,
And share the wine round, for our heroes dead.

And we talk of the Kings, those strong, proud men,
Who ravaged, confessed, and died;
And of churls who rabbled them oft and again,
Perchance with a kindred pride, —
Though the Kings built churches to pierce the sky,
And the rabbling churls in the cross-road lie.

Yet 'twixt the despot and slave half-free,
Old Truth may have message clear;

Since the hard black yew and the lithe young tree
 Belong to an age — and a year,
 And though distant in might and in leaf they be,
 In right of the woods they are near.

And old Truth's message, perchance, may be :
*" Believe in thy kind, whate'er the degree,
 Be it King on his throne, or serf on his knee.
 While Our Lord showers light, in his bounty free,
 On the rock and the vale, — on the sand and the sea."*

They are singing within, with their voices dear,
 To the tunes which are dear as well ;
 And we sit and dream while the words we hear,
 Having tale of our own to tell, —
 Of a far midnight on the terrible sea,
 Which comes back on the tune of their blithe old glee.

As old as the hills, and as old as the sky, —
 As the King on his throne, — as the serf on his knee,
 A song wherein rich can with poor agree,
 With its chorus to make them laugh or cry, —
 Which the young are singing, with no thought nigh,
 Of a night on a terrible sea :
*" I care for nobody ; no, not I,
 Since nobody cares for me."*

The storm had its will. There was wreck, — there was flight
 O'er an ocean of Alps, through the pitch-black night,
 When a good ship sank, and a few got free,
 To cope in their boat with the terrible sea.

And when the day broke, there was blood on the sea,
 From the wild, hot eye of the sun outshed,
 For the heaven was aflame as with fire from Hell,
 And a scorching calm on the waters fell,
 As if ruin had won, and with fiendish glee,
 Sailed forth in his galley to number the dead.

And they rowed their boat o'er the terrible sea,
 As mute as a crew made of ghosts might be ;
 For the best in his heart had not manhood to say,
 That the land was five hundred miles away.

A day and a week, — There was bread for one man ;
 The water was dry. And on this, the few
 Who were rowing their boat o'er the terrible sea,
 To murmur, to curse, and to crave began.
 And how 't was agreed on, no one knew,
 But the feeble and famished, and scorched by the sun
 With his pitiless eye, drew lots to agree,
 What their hideous morrow of meat must be.

O then were the faces frightful to read,
 Of ravening hope, and of cowardly pride
 That lies to the last, its sharp terror to hide;
 And a stillness as though 't were some game of the Dead,
 While they waited the number their lot to decide, —
 There were nine in that boat on the terrible sea,
 And he who drew NINE was the victim to be.

You may think what a ghastly shiver there ran,
 From mate to his mate, as the doom began.

SIX — had a wife with a wild-rose cheek;
 TWO — a brave boy, not a year yet old;
 EIGHT — his last sister, lame and weak,
 Who quivered with palsy more than with cold.

You may think what a breath the respited drew,
 And how wildly still sat the rest of the crew;
 How the voice as it called spoke hoarser and slower;
 The number it next dared to speak was — FOUR.

'T was the rude black man, who had handled an oar
 The best, on that terrible sea, of the few.
 And ugly and grim in the sunshine glare
 Were his thick parched lips, and his dull, small eyes,
 And the tangled fleece of his rusty hair; —
 Ere the next of the breathless the death-lot drew,
 His shout like a sword pierced the silence through.

Let the play end with your number Four.
 What need to draw? Live along you few
 Who have hopes to save and have wives to cry
 O'er the cradles of children free!
 What matter if folk without home should die,
 And be eaten by land or sea?
 "I care for nobody; no, not I,
 Since nobody cares for me."

And with that, a knife — and a heart struck through —
 And the warm red blood, and the coal-black clay.
 And the famine withdrawn from among the few,
 By their horrible meal for another day!

So the eight, thus fed, came at last to land,
 And the tale of their shipmate told,
 As of water found in the burning sand,
 Which braves not the thirsty, cold.
 But the love of the listener, safe and free,
 Goes forth to that slave on that terrible sea.

For fancies from hearth and from home will stray,
 Though within are the dance and the song;

And a grave tale told, if the tune be gay,
 Says little to scare the young,
 While they sing, with their voices clear as can be,
 Having called once more for the blithe old glee, —
 “ I care for nobody ; no, not I,
 Since nobody cares for me.”

But the careless tune, it saith to the old,
 Who sit by the hearth as red as gold,
 When they think of their tale of the terrible sea ;
 “ *Believe in thy kind, whate’er the degree,
 Be it King on his throne, or serf on his knee,
 While Our Lord showers good from his bounty free,
 Over storm, over calm, over land, over sea.*”

Mr. Parvis had so greatly disquieted the minds of the Gentlemen King Arthurs for some minutes by snoring, with strong symptoms of apoplexy, — which, in a mild form, was his normal state of health, — that it was now deemed expedient to wake him and entreat him to allow himself to be escorted home. Mr. Parvis’s reply to this friendly suggestion could not be placed on record without the aid of several dashes, and is therefore omitted. It was conceived in a spirit of the profoundest irritation, and executed with vehemence, contempt, scorn, and disgust. There was nothing for it but to let the excellent gentleman alone, and he fell, without loss of time, into a defiant slumber.

The teetotum being twirled again, so buzzed and bowed in the direction of the young fisherman, that Captain Jorgan advised him to be bright, and prepare for the worst. But it started off at a tangent, late in its career, and fell before a well-looking, bearded man (one who made working drawings for machinery, the captain was informed by his next neighbor), who promptly took it up, like a challenger’s glove.

“ Oswald Penrewen ! ” said the chairman.

“ Here’s Unchris’en at last ! ” the captain whispered Alfred Raybrock. “ Unchris’en goes ahead right smart ; don’t he ? ”

He did, without one introductory word.

Mine is my brother’s Ghost Story. It happened to my brother about thirty years ago, while he was wandering, sketch-book in hand, among the High Alps, picking up

subjects for an illustrated work on Switzerland. Having entered the Oberland by the Brunig Pass, and filled his portfolio with what he used to call "bits" from the neighborhood of Meyringen, he went over the Great Scheideck to Grindlewald, where he arrived one dusky September evening, about three quarters of an hour after sunset. There had been a fair that day, and the place was crowded. In the best inn there was not an inch of space to spare — there were only two inns at Grindlewald thirty years ago — so my brother went to one at the end of the covered bridge next the church, and there, with some difficulty, obtained the promise of a pile of rugs and a mattress, in a room which was already occupied by three other travellers.

The Adler was a primitive hostelry, half farm, half inn, with great rambling galleries outside, and a huge general room, like a barn. At the upper end of this room stood long stoves, like metal counters, laden with steaming pans, and glowing underneath like furnaecs. At the lower end smoking, supping, and chatting, were congregated some thirty or forty guests, chiefly mountaineers, char-drivers, and guides. Among these my brother took his seat, and was served, like the rest, with a bowl of soup, a platter of beef, a flagon of country wine, and a loaf made of Indian corn. Presently a huge St. Bernard dog came and laid his nose upon my brother's arm. In the mean time he fell into conversation with two Italian youths, bronzed and dark-eyed, near whom he happened to be seated. They were Florentines. Their names, they told him, were Stefano and Battisto. They had been travelling for some months on commission, selling camcos, mosaics, sulphur-casts, and the like pretty Italian trifles, and were now on their way to Interlaken and Geneva. Weary of the cold North, they longed, like children, for the moment which should take them back to their own blue hills and gray-green olives; to their workshop on the Ponte Vecchio, and their home down by the Arno.

It was quite a relief to my brother, on going up to bed, to find that these youths were to be two of his fellow-lodgers. The third was already there, and sound asleep, with his face to the wall. They scarcely looked at this

third. They were all tired, and all anxious to rise at day-break, having agreed to walk together over the Wengern Alp as far as Lauterbrunnen. So my brother and the two youths exchanged a brief good-night, and, before many minutes were all as far away in the land of dreams as their unknown companion.

My brother slept profoundly, — so profoundly that, being roused in the morning by a clamor of merry voices, he sat up dreamily in his rugs, and wondered where he was.

“Good day, Signor,” cried Battisto. “Here is a fellow-traveller going the same way as ourselves.”

“Christien Baumann, native of Kandersteg, musical-box maker by trade, stands five feet eleven in his shoes, and is at monsieur’s service to command,” said the sleeper of the night before.

He was a fine young fellow as one would wish to see. Light and strong, and well proportioned, with curling brown hair, and bright honest eyes that seemed to dance at every word he uttered.

“Good morning,” said my brother. “You were asleep last night when we came up.”

“Asleep! I should think so, after being all day in the fair, and walking from Meyringen the evening before. What a capital fair it was!”

“Capital, indeed,” said Battisto. “We sold cameos and mosaics yesterday for nearly fifty francs.”

“O, you sell cameos and mosaics, you two! Show me your cameos, and I will show you my musical boxes. I have such pretty ones, with colored views of Geneva and Chillon on the lids, playing two, four, six, and even eight tunes. Bah! I will give you a concert!”

And with this he unstrapped his pack, displayed his little boxes on the table, and wound them up one after the other, to the delight of the Italians.

“I helped to make them myself, every one,” said he, proudly. “Is it not pretty music? I sometimes set one of them when I go to bed at night, and fall asleep listening to it. I am sure, then, to have pleasant dreams! But let us see your cameos. Perhaps I may buy one for Marie, if they are not too dear. Marie is my sweetheart, and we are to be married next week.”

"Next week!" exclaimed Stefano. "That is very soon. Battisto has a sweetheart also, up at Impruneta; but they will have to wait a long time before they can buy the ring."

Battisto blushed like a girl.

"Hush, brother!" said he. "Show the cameos to Christien, and give your tongue a holiday!"

But Christien was not so to be put off.

"What is her name?" said he. "Tush! Battisto, you must tell me her name! Is she pretty? Is she dark or fair? Do you often see her when you are at home? Is she very fond of you? Is she as fond of you as Marie is of me?"

"Nay, how should I know that?" asked the soberer Battisto. "She loves me, and I love her, — that is all."

"And her name?"

"Margherita."

"A charming name! And she is herself as pretty as her name, I'll engage. Did you say she was fair?"

"I said nothing about it one way or the other," said Battisto, unlocking a green box clamped with iron, and taking out tray after tray of his pretty wares. "There! Those pictures all inlaid in little bits are Roman mosaics, — the flowers on a black ground are Florentine. The ground is of hard, dark stone, and the flowers are made of thin slices of jasper, onyx, carnelian, and so forth. Those forget-me-nots, for instance, are bits of turquoise, and that poppy is cut from a piece of coral."

"I like the Roman ones best," said Christien. "What place is that with all the arches?"

"This is the Coliseum, and the one next to it is St. Peter's. But we Florentines care little for the Roman work. It is not half so fine or so valuable as ours. The Romans make their mosaics of composition."

"Composition or no, I like the little landscapes best," said Christien. There is a lovely one, with a pointed building, and a tree, and mountains at the back. How I should like that one for Marie!"

"You may have it for eight francs," replied Battisto; "we sold two of them yesterday for ten each. It represents the tomb of Caius Cestius, near Rome."

"A tomb!" echoed Christien, considerably dismayed.

"Diable! That would be a dismal present to one's bride."

"She would never guess that it was a tomb if you did not tell her," suggested Stefano.

Christien shook his head.

"That would be next door to deceiving her," said he.

"Nay," interposed my brother, "the owner of that tomb has been dead these eighteen or nineteen hundred years. One almost forgets that he was ever buried in it."

"Eighteen or nineteen hundred years? Then he was a heathen?"

"Undoubtedly, if by that you mean that he lived before Christ."

Christien's face lighted up immediately.

"O, that settles the question," said he, pulling out his little canvas purse, and paying his money down at once. "A heathen's tomb is as good as no tomb at all. I'll have it made into a brooch for her, at Interlaken. Tell me, Battisto, what shall you take home to Italy for your Margherita?"

Battisto laughed and chinked his eight francs. "That depends on trade," said he; "if we make good profits between this and Christmas I may take her a Swiss muslin from Berne; but we have already been away seven months, and we have hardly made a hundred francs over and above our expenses,"

And with this the talk turned upon general matters, the Florentines locked away their treasures, Christien restrapped his pack, and my brother and all went down together, and breakfasted in the open air outside the inn.

It was a magnificent morning; cloudless and sunny, with a cool breeze that rustled in the vine upon the porch and flecked the table with shifting shadows of green leaves. All around and about them stood the great mountains with their blue-white glaciers bristling down to the verge of the pastures, and the pine-woods creeping darkly up their sides. To the left the Wetterhorn; to the right, the Eigher; straight before them, dazzling and imperishable, like an obelisk of frosted silver, the Schreckhorn, or Peak of Terror. Breakfast over, they bade fare-

well to their hostess, and, mountain-staff in hand, took the path to the Wengern Alp. Half in light, half in shadow, lay the quiet valley, dotted over with farms, and traversed by a torrent that rushed, milk-white, from its prison in the glacier. The three lads walked briskly in advance, their voices chiming together every now and then in chorus of laughter. Somehow my brother felt sad. He lingered behind, and plucking a little red flower from the bank, watched it hurry away with the torrent, like a life on the stream of time. Why was his heart so heavy, and why were their hearts so light?

As the day went on my brother's melancholy and the mirth of the young men seemed to increase. Full of youth and hope they talked of the joyous future, and built up pleasant castles in the air. Battisto, grown more communicative, admitted that to marry Margherita, and become a master mosaicist, would fulfil the dearest dream of his life. Stefano, not being in love, preferred to travel. Christien, who seemed to be the most prosperous, declared that it was his darling ambition to rent a farm in his native Kander Valley, and lead the patriarchal life of his fathers. As for the musical-box trade, he said, one should live in Geneva, to make it answer; and for his part, he loved the pine-forests and the snow-peaks better than all the towns in Europe. Marie, too, had been born among the mountains, and it would break her heart if she thought she were to live in Geneva all her life and never see the Kander Thal again. Chatting thus the morning wore on to noon, and the party rested awhile in the shade of a clump of gigantic firs festooned with trailing banners of gray-green moss.

Here they ate their lunch, to the silvery music of one of Christien's little boxes, and by and by heard the sullen echo of an avalanche far away on the shoulder of the Jungfrau.

Then they went on again in the burning afternoon, to heights where the Alp-rose fails from the sterile steep, and the brown lichen grows more and more scantily among the stones. Here only the bleached and barren skeletons of a forest of dead pines varied the desolate monotony; and high on the summit of the pass stood a little solitary inn, between them and the sky.

At this inn they rested again, and drank to the health of Christien and his bride in a jug of country wine. He was in uncontrollable spirits, and shook hands with them all, over and over again.

"By nightfall to-morrow," said he, "I shall hold her once more in my arms! It is now nearly two years since I came home to see her, at the end of my apprenticeship. Now I am foreman, with a salary of thirty francs a week, and well able to marry."

"Thirty francs a week!" echoed Battisto. "Corpo di Bacco! that is a little fortune."

Christien's face beamed.

"Yes," said he, "we shall be very happy; and by and by — who knows? — we may end our days in the Kander Thal, and bring up our children to succeed us. Ah! If Marie knew that I should be there to-morrow night how delighted she would be!"

"How so, Christien?" said my brother. "Does she not expect you?"

"Not a bit of it. She has no idea that I can be there till the day after to-morrow, — nor could I if I took the road all round by Unterseen and Frütigen. I mean to sleep to-night at Lauterbrunnen, and to-morrow morning shall strike across the Tschlingel glacier to Kandersteg. If I rise a little before daybreak I shall be at home by sunset."

At this moment the path took a sudden turn, and began to descend in sight of an immense perspective of very distant valleys. Christien flung his cap into the air and uttered a great shout.

"Look!" said he, stretching out his arms as if to embrace all the dear familiar scene, — "Oh! Look! There are the hills and woods of Interlaken; and here, below the precipices on which we stand, lies Lauterbrunnen! God be praised, who has made our native land so beautiful!"

The Italians smiled at each other, thinking their own Arno Valley far more fair; but my brother's heart warmed to the boy, and echoed his thanksgiving in that spirit which accepts all beauty as a birthright and an inheritance. And now their course lay across an immense plateau, all rich with cornfields and meadows, and studded with substantial homesteads built of old brown wood,

with huge, sheltering eaves, and strings of Indian corn hanging like golden ingots along the carven balconies. Blue whortleberries grew beside the footway, and now and then they came upon a wild gentian, or a star-shaped immortelle. Then the path became a mere zigzag on the face of the precipice, and in less than half an hour they reached the lowest level of the valley. The glowing afternoon had not yet faded from the uppermost pines when they were all dining together in the parlor of a little inn looking to the Jungfrau. In the evening my brother wrote letters, while the three lads strolled about the village. At nine o'clock they bade each other good night, and went to their several rooms.

Weary as he was, my brother found it impossible to sleep. The same unaccountable melancholy still possessed him, and when at last he dropped into an uneasy slumber, it was but to start over and over again from frightful dreams, faint with a nameless terror. Toward morning he fell into a profound sleep, and never woke until the day was fast advancing toward noon. He then found, to his regret, that Christien had long since gone. He had risen before daybreak, breakfasted by candle-light, and started off in the gray dawn, — “as merry,” said the host, “as a fiddler at a fair.”

Stefano and Battisto were still waiting to see my brother, being charged by Christien with a friendly farewell message to him, and an invitation to the wedding. They, too, were asked, and meant to go; so my brother agreed to meet them at Interlaken on the following Tuesday, whence they might walk to Kandersteg by easy stages, reaching their destination on the Thursday morning, in time to go to church with the bridal party. My brother then bought some of the little Florentine cameos, wished the two boys every good fortune, and watched them down the road till he could see them no longer.

Left now to himself, he wandered out with his sketch-book, and spent the day in the upper valley; at sunset he dined alone in his chamber, by the light of a single lamp. This meal despatched, he drew nearer to the fire, took out a pocket edition of Goethe's *Essays on Art*, and promised himself some hours of pleasant reading. (Ah, how well I know that very book, in its faded cover, and

how often I have heard him describe that lonely evening !) The night had by this time set in cold and wet. The damp logs spluttered on the hearth, and a wailing wind swept down the valley, bearing the rain in sudden gusts against the panes. My brother soon found that to read was impossible. His attention wandered incessantly. He read the same sentence over and over again, unconscious of its meaning, and fell into long trains of thought leading far into the dim past.

Thus the hours went by, and at eleven o'clock he heard the doors closing below, and the household retiring to rest. He determined to yield no longer to this dreaming apathy. He threw on fresh logs, trimmed the lamp, and took several turns about the room. Then he opened the casement, and suffered the rain to beat against his face, and the wind to ruffle his hair, as it ruffled the acacia leaves in the garden below. Some minutes passed thus, and when, at length, he closed the window and came back into the room, his face and hair and all the front of his shirt were thoroughly saturated. To unstrap his knapsack and take out a dry shirt was, of course, his first impulse, — to drop the garment, listen eagerly, and start to his feet, breathless and bewildered, was the next.

For, borne fitfully upon the outer breeze, now sweeping past the window, now dying in the distance, he heard a well-remembered strain of melody, subtle and silvery as the "sweet airs" of Prospero's isle, and proceeding unmistakably from the musical-box which had, the day before, accompanied the lunch under the fir-trees of the Wengern Alp!

Had Christien come back, and was it thus that he announced his return? If so, where was he? Under the window? Outside in the corridor? Sheltering in the porch, and waiting for admittance? My brother threw open the casement again, and called him by his name.

"Christien! is that you?"

All without was intensely silent. He could hear the last gust of wind and rain moaning farther and farther away upon its wild course down the valley, and the pine-trees shivering like living things.

"Christien!" he said again, and his own voice seemed to echo strangely on his ear. "Speak! Is it you?"

Still no one answered. He leaned out into the dark night, but could see nothing, — not even the outline of the porch below. He began to think that his imagination had deceived him, when suddenly the strain burst forth again ; this time, apparently in his own chamber.

As he turned, expecting to find Christien at his elbow, the sounds broke off abruptly, and a sensation of intensest cold seized him in every limb, — not the mere chill of nervous terror, not the mere physical result of exposure to wind and rain, but a deadly freezing of every vein, a paralysis of every nerve, an appalling consciousness that in a few moments more the lungs must cease to play, and the heart to beat ! Powerless to speak or stir, he closed his eyes, and believed that he was dying.

This strange faintness lasted but a few seconds. Gradually the vital warmth returned, and, with it, strength to close the window, and stagger to a chair. As he did so, he found the breast of his shirt all stiff and frozen, and the rain clinging in solid icicles upon his hair.

He looked at his watch. It had stopped at twenty minutes before twelve. He took his thermometer from the chimney-piece, and found the mercury at sixty-eight. Heavenly powers ! How were these things possible in a temperature of sixty-eight degrees, and with a large fire blazing on the hearth.

He poured out half a tumbler of cognac, and drank it at a draught. Going to bed was out of the question. He felt that he dared not sleep, — that he scarcely dared to think. All he could do was to change his linen, pile on more logs, wrap himself in his blankets, and sit all night in an easy-chair before the fire.

My brother had not long sat thus, however, before the warmth, and probably the nervous reaction, drew him off to sleep. In the morning, he found himself lying on the bed, without being able to remember in the least how or when he reached it.

It was again a glorious day. The rain and wind were gone, and the Silverhorn at the end of the valley lifted its head into an unclouded sky. Looking out upon the sunshine, he almost doubted the events of the night, and but for the evidence of his watch, which still pointed to twenty minutes before twelve, would have been disposed

to treat the whole matter as a dream. As it was, he attributed more than half his terrors to the promptings of an over-active and over-wearied brain. For all this, he still felt depressed and uneasy, and so very unwilling to pass another night at Lauterbrunnen, that he made up his mind to proceed that morning to Interlaken. While he was yet loitering over his breakfast, and considering whether he should walk the seven miles of road, or hire a vehicle, a char came rapidly up to the inn-door, and a young man jumped out.

"Why, Battisto!" exclaimed my brother, in astonishment, as he came into the room; "what brings *you* here to-day? Where is Stefano?"

"I have left him at Interlaken, signor," replied the Italian.

Something there was in his voice, something in his face, both strange and startling.

"What is the matter?" asked my brother, breathlessly. "He is not ill? No accident has happened?"

Battisto shook his head, glanced furtively up and down the passage, and closed the door.

"Stefano is well, signor; but — but a circumstance has occurred — a circumstance so strange! — Signor, do you believe in spirits?"

"In spirits, Battisto?"

"Ay, signor; for if ever the spirit of any man, dead or living, appealed to human ears, the spirit of Christien came to me last night, at twenty minutes before twelve o'clock."

"At twenty minutes before twelve o'clock!" repeated my brother.

"I was in bed, signor, and Stefano was sleeping in the same room. I had gone up quite warm, and had fallen asleep, full of pleasant thoughts. By and by, although I had plenty of bedclothes, and a rug over me as well, I woke, frozen with cold, and scarcely able to breathe. I tried to call to Stefano, but I had no power to utter the slightest sound. I thought my last moment was come. All at once I heard a sound under the window, — a sound which I knew to be Christien's musical-box; and it played as it played when we lunched under the fir-trees, except that it was more wild and strange

and melancholy, and most solemn to hear, — awful to hear ! Then, signor, it grew fainter and fainter, — and then it seemed to float past upon the wind, and die away. When it ceased, my frozen blood grew warm again, and I cried out to Stefano. When I told him what had happened, he declared I had been only dreaming. I made him strike a light, that I might look at my watch. It pointed to twenty minutes before twelve, and had stopped there ; and — stranger still — Stefano's watch had done the very same. Now tell me, signor, do you believe that there is any meaning in this, or do you think, as Stefano persists in thinking, that it was all a dream ? ”

“ What is your own conclusion, Battisto ? ”

“ My conclusion, signor, is that some harm has happened to poor Christien on the glacier, and that his spirit came to me last night.”

“ Battisto, he shall have help if living, or rescue for his poor corpse if dead ; for I, too, believe that all is not well.”

And with this my brother told him briefly what had occurred to himself in the night ; despatched messengers for the three best guides in Lauterbrunnen ; and prepared ropes, ice-hatchets, alpenstocks, and all such matters necessary for a glacier expedition. Hasten as he would, however, it was nearly midday before the party started.

Arriving in about half an hour at a place called Stechelberg, they left the char in which they had travelled so far, at a chalet, and ascended a steep path in full view of the Briethorn glacier, which rose up to the left like a battlemented wall of solid ice. The way now lay for some time among pastures and pine-forests. Then they came to a little colony of chalets, called Steinberg, where they filled their water-bottles, got their ropes in readiness, and prepared for the Tschlingel glacier. A few minutes more and they were on the ice.

At this point the guides called a halt and consulted together. One was for striking across the lower glacier toward the left, and reaching the upper glacier by the rocks which bound it on the south. The other two preferred the north, or right side ; and this my brother finally took. The sun was now pouring down with

almost tropical intensity, and the surface of the ice, which was broken into long, treacherous fissures, smooth as glass and blue as the summer sky, was both difficult and dangerous. Silently and cautiously they went, tied together at intervals of about three yards each; with two guides in front, and the third bringing up the rear. Turning presently to the right, they found themselves at the foot of a steep rock, some forty feet in height, up which they must climb to reach the upper glacier. The only way in which Battisto or my brother could hope to do this, was by the help of a rope steadied from below and above. Two of the guides accordingly clambered up the face of the crag by notches in the surface, and one remained below. The rope was then let down, and my brother prepared to go first. As he planted his foot in the first notch a smothered cry from Battisto arrested him.

“Santa Maria! Signor! Look yonder!”

My brother looked, and there (he ever afterward declared), as surely as there is a heaven above us all, he saw Christien Baumann standing in the full sunlight not a hundred yards distant! Almost in the same moment that my brother recognized him he was gone. He neither faded, nor sank down, nor moved away; but was simply gone as if he had never been. Pale as death, Battisto fell upon his knees and covered his face with his hands. My brother, awe-stricken and speechless, leaned against the rock, and felt that the object of his journey was but too fatally accomplished. As for the guides, they could not conceive what had happened.

“Did you see nothing?” asked my brother and Battisto, both together.

But the men had seen nothing, and the one who had remained below said, “What should I see but the ice and the sun?”

To this my brother made no other reply than by announcing his intention to have a certain crevasse, from which he had not once removed his eyes since he saw the figure standing on the brink, thoroughly explored before he went a step further, whereupon the two men came down from the top of the crag, resumed the ropes, and followed my brother incredulously. At the narrow end

of the fissure he paused, and drove his alpenstock firmly into the ice. It was an unusually long crevasse, — at first a mere crack, but widening gradually as it went, and reaching down to unknown depths of dark, deep blue, fringed with long, pendent icicles like diamond stalactites. Before they had followed the course of the crevasse for more than ten minutes the youngest of the guides uttered a hasty exclamation.

“I see something!” cried he. “Something dark, wedged in the teeth of the crevasse, a great way down!”

They all saw it, — a mere indistinguishable mass, almost closed over by the ice-walls at their feet. My brother offered a hundred francs to the man who would go down and bring it up. They all hesitated.

“We don’t know what it is,” said one.

“Perhaps it’s only a dead chamois,” suggested another.

Their apathy enraged him.

“It is no chamois,” he said, angrily. “It is the body of Christien Beaumann, native of Kandersteg. And, by Heaven, if you are all too cowardly to make the attempt, I will go down myself!”

The youngest guide threw off his hat and coat, tied a rope about his waist, and took a hatchet in his hand.

“I will go, monsieur,” said he, and without another word suffered himself to be lowered in. My brother turned away. A sickening anxiety came upon him, and presently he heard the dull echo of the hatchet far down in the ice. Then there was a call for another rope, and then — the men all drew aside in silence, and my brother saw the youngest guide standing once more beside the chasm, flushed and trembling, with the body of Christien lying at his feet.

Poor Christien! They made a rough bier with their ropes and alpenstocks, and carried him, with great difficulty, back to Steinberg. There they got additional help as far as Stechelberg, where they laid him in the char, and so brought him on to Lauterbrunnen. The next day my brother made it his sad business to precede the body to Kandersteg, and prepare his friends for its arrival. To this day, though all these things happened thirty years ago, he cannot bear to recall Marie’s despair, or all the

mourning that he innocently brought upon that peaceful valley. Poor Marie has been dead this many a year; and when my brother last passed through the Kander Thal on his way to the Ghemmi, he saw her grave, beside the grave of Christien Baumann, in the village burial-ground. — This is my brother's Ghost Story.

The chairman now announced that the clock declared the teetotum spun out, and that the meeting was dissolved. Yet even then the young fisherman could not refrain from once more asking his question. This occasioned the Gentlemen King Arthurs, as they got on their hats and great-coats, evidently to regard him as a young fisherman who was touched in his head, and some of them even cherished the idea that the captain was his keeper.

As no man dared to awake the mighty Parvis, it was resolved that a heavy member of the society should fall against him as it were by accident, and immediately withdraw to a safe distance. The experiment was so happily accomplished that Mr. Parvis started to his feet on the best terms with himself, as a light sleeper whose wits never left him, and who could always be broad awake on occasion. Quite an airy jocundity sat upon this respectable man in consequence; and he rallied the briskest member of the fraternity on being "a sleepy-head," with an amount of humor previously supposed to be quite incompatible with his responsible circumstances in life.

Gradually the society departed into the cold night, and the captain and his young companion were left alone. The captain had so refreshed himself by shaking hands with everybody to an amazing extent that he was in no hurry to go to bed.

"To-morrow morning," said the captain, "we must find out the lawyer and the clergyman here; they are the people to consult on our business. And I'll be up and out early, and asking questions of everybody I see; thereby propagating at least one of the Institutions of my native country."

As the captain was slapping his leg the landlord appeared with two small candlesticks.

"Your room," said he, "is at the top of the house. An excellent bed, but you'll hear the wind."

"I've heerd it afore," replied the captain. "Come and make a passage with me, and you shall hear it."

"It's considered to blow here," said the landlord.

"Weather gets its young strength here," replied the captain; "goes into training for the Atlantic Ocean. Yours are little winds just beginning to feel their way and crawl. Make a voyage with me, and I'll show you a grown-up one out on business. But you have n't told my friend where he lies."

"It's the room at the head of the stairs, before you take the second staircase through the wall," returned the landlord. "You can't mistake it,—it's a double-bedded room,—because there's no other."

"The room where the seafaring man is!" said the captain.

"The room where the seafaring man is."

"I hope he may n't finish telling his story in his sleep," remarked the captain. "Shall I turn into the room where the seafaring man is, Alfred?"

"No, Captain Jorgan, why should you? There would be little fear of his waking me, even if he told his whole story out."

"He's in the bed nearest the door," said the landlord. "I've been in to look at him once, and he's sound enough. Good night, gentlemen."

The captain immediately shook hands with the landlord in quite an enthusiastic manner, and having performed that national ceremony as if he had had no opportunity of performing it for a long time, accompanied his young friend up stairs.

"Something tells me," said the captain as they went, "that Miss Kitty Tregarthen's marriage ain't put off for long, and that we shall light on what we want."

"I hope so. When, do you think?"

"Wa'al, I could n't just say when, but soon. Here's your room," said the captain, softly opening the door and looking in; "and here's the berth of the seafaring man. I wonder what like he is. He breathes deep; don't he?"

"Sleeping like a child, to judge from the sound," said the young fisherman.

"Dreaming of home maybe," returned the captain.

"Can't see him. Sleeps a deal more wholesomely than Arson Parvis, but a'most as sound; don't he? Good night, fellow-traveller."

"Good night, Captain Jorgan, and many, many thanks!"

"I 'll wait till I 'arn 'em, boy, afore I take 'em," returned the captain, clapping him cheerfully on the back. "Pleasant dreams of—you know who!"

When the young fisherman had closed the door, the captain waited a moment or two, listening for any stir on the part of the unknown seafaring man. But none being audible, the captain pursued the way to his own chamber.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEAFARING MAN.

Who was the Seafaring Man? And what might he have to say for himself? He answers those questions in his own words :—

I begin by mentioning what happened on my journey northward, from Falmouth, in Cornwall, to Steepways, in Devonshire. I have no occasion to say (being here) that it brought me last night to Lanrean. I had business in hand which was part very serious, and part (as I hoped) very joyful ; and this business, you will please to remember, was the cause of my journey.

After landing at Falmouth I travelled on foot, because of the expense of riding, and because I had anxieties heavy on my mind, and walking was the best way I knew of to lighten them. The first two days of my journey the weather was fine and soft, the wind being mostly light airs from south, and south and by west. On the third day I took a wrong turning, and had to fetch a long circuit to get right again. Toward evening, while I was still on the road, the wind shifted ; and a sea-fog came rolling in on the land. I went on through, what I ask leave to call, the white darkness ; keeping the sound of the sea on my left hand for a guide, and feeling those anxieties of mine before mentioned pulling heavier and heavier at my mind, as the fog thickened and the wet trickled down my face.

It was still early in the evening, when I heard a dog bark, away in the distance, on the right-hand side of me. Following the sound as well as I could, and shouting to the dog from time to time, to set him barking again, I stumbled up at last against the back of a house ; and, hearing voices inside, groped my way round to the door, and knocked on it smartly with the flat of my hand.

The door was opened by a slip-shod young hussy in a torn gown; and the first inquiries I made of her discovered to me that the house was an inn.

Before I could ask more questions the landlord opened the parlor of the inn and came out. A clamor of voices, and a fine, comforting smell of fire and grog and tobacco came out, also, along with him.

"The tap-room fire 's out," says the landlord. "You don't think you would dry more comfortable like, if you went to bed?" says he, looking hard at me.

"No," says I, looking hard at *him*, "I don't."

Before more words were spoken a jolly voice hailed us from inside the parlor.

"What 's the matter, landlord?" says the jolly voice. "Who is it?"

"A seafaring man, by the looks of him," says the landlord, turning round from me, and speaking into the parlor.

"Let 's have the seafaring man in," says the voice. "Let 's vote him free of the Club, for this night only."

A lot of other voices thereupon said, "Hear! hear!" in a solemn manner, as if it was church service. After which there was a hammering, as if it was a trunk-maker's shop. After which the landlord took me by the arm, gave me a push into the parlor, and there I was, free of the Club.

The change from the fog outside to the warm room and the shining candles so completely dazed me, that I stood blinking at the company more like an owl than a man. Upon which the company again said, "Hear! hear!" Upon which I returned for answer, "Hear! hear!"—considering those words to mean, in the Club's language, something similar to "How d'ye do." The landlord then took me to a round table by the fire, where I got my supper, together with the information that my bedroom, when I wanted it, was number four up stairs.

I noticed before I fell to with my knife and fork, that the room was full, and that the chairman at the top of the table was the man with the jolly voice, and was seemingly amusing the company by telling them a story. I paid more attention to my supper than to what he was saying; and all I can now report of it is, that his story-

telling and my eating and drinking both came to an end together.

"Now," says the chairman, "I have told my story to start you all. Who comes next?" He took up a tectotum, and gave it a spin on the table. When it toppled over, it fell opposite me; upon which the chairman said, "It's your turn next. Order! order! I call on the seafaring man to tell the second story!" He finished the words off with a knock of his hammer; and the Club (having nothing else to say, as I suppose) tried back, and once again sang out all together, "Hear! hear!"

"I hope you will please to let me off," I said to the chairman, "for the reason that I have got no story to tell."

"No story to tell!" says he. "A sailor without a story! Who ever heard of such a thing? Nobody!"

"Nobody," says the Club, bursting out all together at last with a new word, by way of a change.

I can't say I quite relished the chairman's talking of me as if I was before the mast. A man likes his true quality to be known, when he is publicly spoken to among a party of strangers. I made my true quality known to the chairman and company in these words:—

"All men who follow the sea, gentlemen, are sailors," I said. "But there's degrees aboard ship as well as ashore. My rating, if you please, is the rating of a second mate."

"Ay, ay, surely?" says the chairman. "Where did you leave your ship?"

"At the bottom of the sea," I made answer, — which was, I am sorry to say, only too true.

"What! you've been wrecked?" says he. "Tell us all about it. A shipwreck-story is just the sort of story we like. Silence there, all down the table! — silence for the second mate!"

The Club, upon this, instead of keeping silence, broke out vehemently with another new word, and said, "Chair!" After which every man suddenly held his peace, and looked at me.

I did a very foolish thing. Without stopping to take counsel with myself, I started off at score, and did just what the chairman had bidden me. If they had waited

the whole night long for it, I should never have told them the story they wanted from me at first, having all my life been a wretched bad hand at such matters, — for the reason, as I take it, that a story is bound to be something which is not true. But when I found the company willing, on a sudden, to put up with nothing better than the account of my shipwreck (which is not a story at all), the unexpected luck of being let off with only telling the truth about myself was too much of a temptation for me, — so I up and told it.

I got on well enough with the storm, and the striking of the vessel, and the strange chance afterward, which proved to be the saving of my life, — the assembly all listening (to my great surprise) as if they had never heard anything of the sort before. But when the necessity came next for going further than this, and for telling them what had happened to me after the saving of my life, — or, to put it plainer, for telling them what place I was cast away on, and what company I was cast away in, — the words died straight off on my lips. For this reason; namely, that those particulars of my statement made up just that part of it which I could n't and durst n't let out to strangers, — no, not if every man among them had offered me a hundred pounds apiece, on the spot, to do it!

“Go on!” says the chairman. “What happened next? How did you get on shore?”

Feeling what a fool I had been to run myself headlong into a scrape, for want of thinking before I spoke, I now cast about discreetly in my mind for the best means of finishing off-hand without letting out a word to the company concerning those particulars before mentioned. I was some little time before seeing my way to this; keeping the chairman and company all the while waiting for an answer. The Club losing patience, in consequence, got from staring hard at me, to drumming with their feet, and then to calling out lustily, “Go on! go on! Chair! Order!” and such like. In the midst of this childish hubbub I saw my way to what I considered to be rather a neat finish, and got on my legs to ease them all off with it handsomely.

“Hear! hear!” says the Club “He’s going on again at last.”

“Gentlemen!” I made answer, “with your permission I will now conclude by wishing you all good night!” Saying which words, I gave them a friendly nod, to make things pleasant, and walked straight to the door. It’s hardly to be believed, though nevertheless quite true, that these curious men all howled and groaned at me directly, as if I had done them some grievous injury. Thinking I would try to pacify them with their own favorite catch-word, I said, “Hear! hear!” as civilly as might be, whereupon they all returned for answer, “Oh! oh!” I never belonged to a Club of any kind myself; and, after what I saw of *that* Club, I don’t care if I never do.

My bedroom, when I found my way up to it, was large and airy enough, but not over-clean. There were two beds in it, not over-clean either. Both being empty, I had my choice. One was near the window, and one near the door. I thought the bed near the door looked a trifle the sweeter of the two, and took it.

After falling asleep, it was the gray of the morning before I woke. When I had fairly opened my eyes and shook up my memory into telling me where I was, I made two discoveries. First, that the room was a deal colder in the new morning than it had been overnight. Second, that the other bed near the window had got some one sleeping in it. Not that I could see the man from where I lay; but I heard his breathing plain enough. He must have come up into the room, of course, after I had fallen asleep, and he had tumbled himself quietly into bed without disturbing me. There was nothing wonderful in that; and nothing wonderful in the landlord letting the empty bed if he could find a customer for it. I turned and tried to go asleep again; but I was out of sorts, — out of sorts so badly, that even the breathing of the man in the other bed fretted and worried me. After tumbling and tossing for a quarter of an hour or more, I got up for a change; and walked softly in my stockings to the window to look at the morning.

The heavens were brightening into daylight, and the mists were blowing off, past the window, like puffs of smoke. When I got even with the second bed I stopped to look at the man in it. He lay, sound asleep, turned

toward the window ; and the end of the counterpane was drawn up over the lower half of his face. Something struck me, on a sudden, in his hair and his forehead ; and, though not an inquisitive man by nature, I stretched out my hand to the end of the counterpane, in spite of myself.

I uncovered his face softly ; and there, in the morning light, I saw my brother, Alfred Raybrock.

What I ought to have done, or what other men might have done in my place, I don't know. What I really did, was to drop back a step, — to steady myself, with my hand, on the sill of the window, — and to stand so, looking at him. Three years ago I had said good by to my wife ; to my little child, to my old mother, and to Brother Alfred here, asleep under my eyes. For all those three years no news from me had reached them, — and the underwriters, as I knew, must have long since reported that the ship I sailed in was lost, and that all hands on board had perished. My heart was heavy when I thought of my kindred at home, and of the weary time they must have waited and sorrowed before they gave me up for dead. Twice I reached out my hand to wake Alfred, and to ask him about my wife and my child ; and twice I drew it back again, in fear of what might happen if he saw me, standing by his bed-head in the gray morning, like Hugh Raybrock risen up from the grave.

I drew my hand back the second time, and waited a minute. In that minute he woke. I had not moved, or spoken a word, or touched him, — I had only looked at him longingly. If such things could be, I should say it was my looking that woke him. His eyes, when they opened under mine, passed on a sudden from fast asleep to broad awake. They first settled on my face with a startled look, — which passed directly. He lifted himself on his elbow, and opened his lips to speak, but never said a word. His eyes strained and strained into mine ; and his face turned all over of a ghastly white. “ Alfred ! ” I said, “ don't you know me ? ” There seemed to be a deadly terror pent up in him, and I thought my voice might set it free. I took fast hold of him by the hands and spoke again. “ Alfred ! ” I said —

O sirs, where can a man like me find words to tell all that was said and all that was thought between us two brothers? Please to pardon my not saying more of it than I say here. We sat down together side by side. The poor lad burst out crying, and got vent that way. I kept my hold of his hands, and waited a bit before I spoke to him again. I think I was worst off now of the two, — no tears came to help *me*, — I have n't got my brother's quickness any way; and my troubles have roughened and hardened me outside. But, God knows, I felt it keenly; all the more keenly, maybe, because I was slow to show it.

After a little, I put the questions to him which I had been longing to ask from the time when I first saw his face on the pillow. Had they all given me up at home for dead (I asked)? Yes; after long, long hoping, one by one they had given me up, — my wife (God bless her!) last of all. I meant to ask next if my wife was alive and well; but, try as I might, I could only say "Margaret?" and look hard in my brother's fate. He knew what I meant. Yes, (he said,) she was living; she was at home; she was in her widow's weeds, — poor soul; her widow's weeds! I got on better with my next question about the child. Was it born alive? Yes. Boy or girl? Girl. And living now; and much grown? Living, surely, and grown, — poor little thing, what a question to ask! — grown of course, in three years! And mother! Well, mother was a trifle fallen away, and more silent within herself than she used to be, — fretting at times; fretting (like my wife) on nights when the sea rose, and the windows shook and shivered in the wind. Thereupon my brother and I waited a bit again, — I with my questions, and he with his answers, — and while we waited, I thanked God inwardly, with all my heart and soul, for bringing me back, living, to wife and kindred, while wife and kindred were living too.

My brother dried the tears off his face, and looked at me a little. Then he turned aside suddenly, as if he remembered something, and stole his hand in a hurry under the pillow of his bed. Nothing came out from below the pillow but his black neck-handkerchief, which he now unfolded slowly, looking at me all the

while with something strange in his face that I could n't make out.

"What are you doing?" I asked him. "What are you looking at me like that for?"

Instead of making answer, he took a crumpled morsel of paper out of his neck-handkerchief, opened it carefully, and held it to the light to let me see what it was. Lord in heaven! — my own writing, — the morsel of paper I had committed, long, long since, to the mercy of the deep. Thousands and thousands of miles away I had trusted that Message to the waters, and here it was now, in my brother's hands! A chilly fear came over me at the seeing it again. Scrap of paper as it was, it looked to my eyes like the ghost of my own past self, gone home before me invisibly over the great wastes of the sea.

My brother pointed down solemnly to the writing.

"Hugh," he said, "were you in your right mind when you wrote those words?"

"Tell me, first," I made answer, "how and when the Message came to you. I can't quiet myself fit to talk till I know that."

He told me how the paper had come to hand, — also how his good friend, the captain, having promised to help him, was then under the same roof with our two selves. But there he stopped. It was not till later in the day that I heard of what had happened (through this dreadful doubt about the money) in the matter of his sweet-heart and his marriage.

The knowledge that the Message had reached him by mortal means — on the word of a seaman, I half doubted it when I first set eyes on the paper! — eased me in my mind; and I now did my best to quiet Alfred, in my turn. I told him that I was in my right senses, though sorely troubled, when my hand had written those words. Also, that where the writing was rubbed out, I could tell him, for his necessary guidance and mine, what once stood in the empty places. Also, that I knew no more what the real truth might be than he did, till inquiry was made, and the slander on father's good name was dragged boldly into daylight to show itself for what it was worth. Lastly, that all the voyage home there was one hope and

one determination uppermost in my mind, — the hope that I might get safe to England, and find my wife and kindred alive to take me back among them again, — the determination that I would put the doubt about father's five hundred pound to the proof, if ever my feet touched English land once more.

"Come out with me now, Alfred," I said, after winding up as above, "and let me tell you in the quiet of the morning how that Message came to be written and committed to the sea."

We went down stairs softly, and let ourselves out without disturbing any one. The sun was just rising when we left the village and took our way slowly over the cliffs. As soon as the sea began to open on us I returned to that true story of mine which I had left but half told the night before, — and this time I went through with it to the end.

I shipped, as you may remember (were my first words to Alfred), in a second mate's berth, on board the Peruvian, nine hundred tons' burden. We carried an assorted cargo, and we were bound round the Horn, to Truxillo and Guayaquil, on the western coast of South America. From this last port — namely, Guayaquil — we were to go back to Truxillo, and there to take in another cargo for the return voyage. Those were all the instructions communicated to me when I signed articles with the owners, in London City, three years ago.

After we had been, I think, a week at sea, I heard from the first mate, — who had himself heard it from the captain, — that the supercargo we were taking with us, on the outward voyage, was to be left at Truxillo, and that another supercargo (also connected with our firm, and latterly employed by them as their foreign agent) was to ship with us at that port for the voyage home. His name on the captain's instructions was Mr. Lawrence Clissold. None of us had ever set eyes on him to our knowledge, and none of us knew more about him than what I have told you here.

We had a wonderful voyage out, especially round the Horn. I never before saw such fair weather in that infernal latitude, and I never expect to see the like again.

We followed our instructions to the letter, discharging our cargo in fine condition, and returning to Truxillo to load again as directed. At this place I was so unfortunate as to be seized with the fever of the country, which laid me on my back, while we were in harbor; and which only let me return to my duty after we had been ten days at sea, on the voyage home again. For this reason, the first morning when I was able to get on deck was also the first time of my setting eyes on our new supercargo, Mr. Lawrence Clissold.

I found him to be a long, lean, wiry man, with some complaint in his eyes which forced him to wear spectacles of blue glass. His age appeared to be fifty-six, or thereabouts; but he might well have been more. There was not above a handful of gray hair, altogether, on his bald head, — and, as for the wrinkles at the corners of his eyes and the sides of his mouth, if he could have had a pound apiece in his pocket for every one of them, he might have retired from business from that time forth. Judging by certain signs in his face, and by a suspicious morning-tremble in his hands, I set him down, in my own mind (rightly enough, as it afterwards turned out), for a drinker. In one word, I did n't like the looks of the new supercargo; and, on the first day when I got on deck, I found that he had reasons of his own for paying me back in my own coin, and not liking *my* looks, either.

"I've been asking the captain about you," were his first words to me in return for my civilly wishing him good morning. "Your name's Raybrock, I hear. Are you any relation to the late Hugh Raybrock, of Barnstaple, Devonshire?"

"Rather a near relation," I made answer. "I am the late Hugh Raybrock's eldest son."

There was no telling how his eyes looked, because they were hidden by his blue spectacles, but I saw him wince at the mouth when I gave him that reply.

"Your father ended by failing in business, did n't he?" was the next question the supercargo put to me.

"Who told you he failed?" I asked, sharply enough.

"O, I heard it!" says Mr. Lawrence Clissold, both looking and speaking as if he was glad to have heard it, and he hoped it was true.

"Whoever told you my father failed in business told you a lie," I said. "His business fell off toward the last years of his life, — I don't deny it. But every creditor he had was honestly paid at his death, without so much as touching the provision left for his widow and children. Please to mention that next time you hear it reported that my father failed in business."

Mr. Clissold grinned to himself, and I lost my temper.

"I'll tell you what," I said to him, "I don't like your laughing to yourself when I ask you to do justice to my father's memory; and, what is more, I did n't like the way you mentioned that report of his failing in business, just now. You looked as if you hoped it was true."

"Perhaps I did," says Mr. Clissold, coolly. "Shall I tell you why? When I was a young man I was unlucky enough to owe your father some money. He was a merciless creditor, and he threatened me with a prison if the debt remained unpaid on the day when it was due. I have never forgotten that circumstance; and I should certainly not have been sorry if your father's creditors had given him a lesson in forbearance, by treating him as harshly as he once treated me."

"My father had a right to ask for his own," I broke out. "If you owed him the money and did n't pay it —"

"I never told you I did n't pay it," says Mr. Clissold, as coolly as ever.

"Well, if you did pay it," I put in, "then you did n't go to prison, and you have no cause of complaint now. My father wronged nobody; and I won't believe he ever wronged *you*. He was a just man in all his dealings; and whoever tells me to the contrary —"

"That will do," says Mr. Clissold, backing away to the cabin stairs. "You seem to have not quite got over your fever yet. I'll leave you to air yourself in the sea-breeze, Mr. Second Mate; and I'll receive your excuses when you are cool enough to make them."

"It is a son's business to defend his father's character," I answered; "and, cool or hot, I'll leave the ship sooner than ask your pardon for doing my duty!"

"You *will* leave the ship!" says the supercargo,

quietly going down into the cabin. "You will leave at the next port, if I have any interest with the captain."

That was how Mr. Clissold and I scraped acquaintance on the first day when we met together! And as we began, so we went on to the end. But though he persecuted me in almost every other way, he did not anger me again about father's affairs; he seemed to have dropped talking of them at once and forever. On my side I nevertheless bore in mind what he had said to me, and determined, if I got home safe, to go to the lawyer at Barnstaple who keeps father's old books and letters for us, and see what information they might give on the subject of Mr. Lawrence Clissold. I myself had never heard his name mentioned at home, — father (as you know, Alfred) being always close about business-matters, and mother never troubling him with idle questions about his affairs. But it was likely enough that he and Mr. Clissold might have been concerned in money-matters, in past years, and that Mr. Clissold might have tried to cheat him, and failed. I rather hoped it might prove to be so, — for the truth is, the supercargo provoked me past all endurance, and I hated him as heartily as he hated me.

All this while the ship was making such a speedy voyage down the coast that we began to think we were carrying back with us the fine weather we had brought out. But on nearing Cape Horn the signs and tokens appeared which told us that our run of luck was at an end. Down went the barometer, lower and lower; and up got the wind in the northerly quarter, higher and higher. This happened toward nightfall, and at daybreak next day we found ourselves forced to lay to. It blew all that day and all that night; toward noon the next day it lulled a little, and we made sail again. But at sunset the heavens grew blacker than ever, and the wind returned upon us with double and treble fury. The Peruvian was a fine, stout, roomy ship, but the unhandiest vessel at laying to I ever sailed in. After taking tons of water on board and losing our best boat, we had nothing left for it but to turn tail and scud for our lives. For the next three days and nights we ran before the wind. The gale moderated more than once in that time, but there was such a sea on

that we durst n't heave the ship to. From the beginning of the gale none of us officers had a chance of taking any observations. We only knew that the wind was driving us as hard as we could go in a southerly direction, and that we were by this time hundreds of miles out of the ordinary course of ships in doubling the Cape.

On the third night—or rather, I should say, early on the fourth morning—I went below, dead-beat, to get a little rest, leaving the vessel in charge of the captain and the first mate. The night was then pitch-black,—it was raining, hailing, and sleeting, all at once,—and the Peruvian was wallowing in the frightful seas, as if she meant to roll the masts out of her. I tumbled into bed the instant my wet oil-skins were off my back, and slept as only a man can who lays himself down dead-beat.

I was woke—how long afterward I don't know—by being pitched clean out of my berth on to the cabin floor; and at the same moment I heard the crash of the ship's timbers, forward, which told me it was all over with us.

Though bruised and shaken by my fall I was on deck directly. Before I had taken two steps forward the Peruvian forged ahead on the send of the sea, swung round a little, and struck heavily at the bows for the second time. The shrouds of the foremast cracked one after another, like pistol-shots, and the mast went overboard. I next felt our people go tearing past me, in the black darkness, to the lee-side of the vessel; and I knew that in their last extremity they were taking to the boats. I say I *felt* them go past me, because the roaring of the sea and the howling of the wind deafened me, on deck, as completely as the darkness blinded me. I myself no more believed the boats would live in the sea than I believed the ship would hold together on the reef; but as the rest were running the risk, I made up my mind to run it with them.

But before I followed the crew to leeward I went below again for a minute,—not to save money or clothes, for, with death staring me in the face, neither were of any account now,—but to get my little writing-case which mother had given me at parting. A curl of Margaret's hair was in the pocket inside it, with all the letters she had sent me when I had been away on other voyages.

If I saved anything I was resolved to save this ; and if I died, I would die with it about me.

My locker was jammed with the wrenching of the ship, and had to be broken open. I was, maybe, longer over this job than I myself supposed. At any rate, when I got on deck again with my case in my breast, it was useless calling, and useless groping about. The larger of the two boats, when I felt for it, was gone ; and every soul on board was beyond a doubt gone with her.

Before I had time to think I was thrown off my feet by another sea coming on board, and a great heave of the vessel which drove her farther over the reef, and canted the after-part of her up like the roof of a house. In that position the stern stuck, wedged fast into the rocks beneath, while the fore-part of the ship was all to pieces and down under water. If the after-part kept the place it was now jammed in till daylight there might be a chance, but if the sea wrenched it out from between the rocks there was an end of me. After straining my eyes to discover if there was land beyond the reef, and seeing nothing but the flash of the breakers, like white fire in the darkness, I crawled below again to the shelter of the cabin stairs and waited for death or daylight.

As the morning hours wore on the weather moderated again, and the after-part of the vessel, though shaken often, was not shaken out of its place. A little before dawn the winds and the waves, though fierce enough still, allowed me at last to hear something besides themselves. What I did hear, crouched up in my dark corner, was a heavy thumping and grinding, every now and then, against the side of the ship to windward. Day broke soon afterward, and when I climbed to the deck I clawed my way up to windward first to see what the noise was caused by.

My first look over the bulwark showed me that it was caused by the boat which my unfortunate brother-officers and the crew had launched and gone away in when the ship struck. The boat was bottom upward, thumping against the ship's side on the lift of the sea. I wanted no second look at it to tell me that every mother's son of them was drowned.

The main and mizzen masts still stood I got into the

mizzen-rigging to look out next to leeward, — and there, in the blessed daylight, I saw a low, green, rocky little island, lying away beyond the reef, barely a mile distant from the ship! My life began to look of some small value to me again when I saw land. I got higher up in the rigging to note how the current set, and where there might be a passage through the reef. The ship had driven over the rocks through the worst of the surf, and the sea between myself and the island, though angry and broken in places, was not too high for a lost man like me to venture on, provided I could launch the last and smallest boat still left in the vessel. I noted carefully the likeliest-looking channel for trying the experiment, and then got down on deck again to see what I could do, first of all, with the boat.

At the moment when my feet touched the deck I heard a dull knocking and banging just under them, in the region of the cabin. When the sound first reached my ears I got such a shock of surprise that I could neither move nor speak. It had never yet crossed my mind that a single soul was left in the vessel besides myself; but now there was something in the knocking noise which started the hope in me, that I was not alone. I shook myself up, and got down directly.

The noise came from inside one of the sleeping-berths, on the far side of the main cabin; the door of which was jammed, no doubt, just as my locker had been jammed, by the wrenching of the ship. "Who 's there?" I called out. A faint muffled kind of voice answered something through the air-grating in the upper part of the door. I got up on the overthrown cabin furniture; and, looking in through the trellis-work of the grating, found myself face to face with the blue spectacles of Mr. Lawrence Clissold, looking out!

God forgive me for thinking it, but there was not a man in the vessel I would n't sooner have found alive in her than Mr. Clissold! Of all that ship's company, we two, who were least friendly together, were the only two saved.

I had a better chance of breaking out the jammed door from the main cabin than he had from the berth inside; and in less than five minutes he was set free. I had

smelled spirits already through the air-grating, and now, when he and I stood face to face, I saw what the smell meant. There was an open case of spirits by the bedside, — two of the bottles out of it were lying broken on the floor, — and Mr. Clissold was drunk.

“What’s the matter with the ship?” says he, looking fierce, and speaking thick.

“You shall see for yourself,” says I. With which words I took hold of him, and pulled him after me up the cabin stairs. I reckoned on the sight that would meet him, when he first looked over the deck, to sober his drunken brains, — and I reckoned right; he fell on his knees, stock still and speechless as if he was turned to stone.

I lashed him up safe to the cabin rail, and left it to the air to bring him round. He had, likely enough, been drinking in the sleeping-berth for days together, — for none of us, as I now remembered, had seen him since the gale set in, — and even if he had had sense enough to try to get out, or to call for help, when the ship struck, he would not have made himself heard in the noise and confusion of that awful time. But for the lull in the weather I should not have heard him myself when he attempted to get free in the morning. Enemy of mine as he was, he had a pair of arms, — and he was worth untold gold, in my situation, for that reason. With the help I could make him give me, there was no doubt now about launching the boat. In half an hour I had the means ready for trying the experiment; and Mr. Clissold was sober enough to see that his life depended on his doing what I told him.

The sky looked angry still, — there was no opening anywhere, — and the clouds were slowly banking up again to windward. The supercargo knew what I meant when I pointed that way, and worked with a will when I gave him the word. I had previously stowed away in the boat such stores of meat, biscuit, and fresh water as I could readily lay hands on; together with a compass, a lantern, a few candles, and some boxes of matches in my pocket, to kindle light and fire with. At the last moment I thought of a gun and some powder and shot. The powder and shot I found, and an old flint pocket-pis-

tol in the captain's cabin, — with which, for fear of wasting precious time, I was forced to be content. The pistol lay on the top of the medicine-chest, and I took that also, finding it handy, and not knowing but what it might be of use. Having made these preparations, we launched the boat down the steep of the deck, into the water over the forward part of the ship which was sunk. I took the oars, ordering Mr. Clissold to sit still in the stern-sheets, and pulled for the island.

It was neck or nothing with us more than once, before we were two hundred yards from the ship. Luckily the supercargo was used to boats; and muddled as he still was, he had sense enough to sit quiet. We found our way into the smooth channel which I had noted from the mizzen-rigging, after which it was easy enough to get ashore.

We landed on a little sandy creek. From the time of our leaving the ship the supercargo had not spoken a word to me, nor I to him. I now told him to lend a hand in getting the stores out of the boat, and in helping me to carry them to the first sheltered place we could find in shore on the island. He shook himself up with a sulky look at me, and did as I had bidden him. We found a little dip, or dell, in the ground, after getting up the low sides of the island, which was sheltered to windward, — and here I left him to stow away the stores while I walked farther on to survey the place.

According to the hasty judgment I formed at the time, the island was not a mile across, and not much more than three miles round. I noted nothing in the way of food but a few wild roots and vegetables, growing in ragged patches amidst the thick scrub which covered the place. There was not a tree on it anywhere, nor any living creatures, nor any signs of fresh water that I could see. Standing on the highest ground, I looked about anxiously for other islands that might be inhabited; there were none visible, — at least none in the hazy state of the heavens that morning. When I fairly discovered what a desert the place was; when I remembered how far it lay out of the track of ships; and when I thought of the small store of provisions which we had brought with us, the doubt lest we might only have changed the chance

of death by drowning for the chance of death by starvation was so strong in me that I determined to go back to the boat, with the desperate notion of making another trip to the vessel for water and food. I say desperate, because the clouds to windward were banking up blacker and higher every minute. The wind was freshening already, and there was every sign of the storm coming on again wilder and fiercer than ever.

Mr. Clissold, when I passed him on my way back to the beach, had got the stores pretty tidy, covered with the tarpaulin which I had thrown over them in the bottom of the boat. Just as I looked down at him in the hollow, I saw him take a bottle of spirits out of the pocket of his pilot-coat. He must have stowed the bottle away there, as I suppose, while I was breaking open the door of his berth. "You'll be drowned, and I shall have double allowance to live upon here," was all he said to me when he heard I was going back to the ship. "Yes! and die, in your turn, when you've got through it," says I, going away to the boat. It's shocking to think of now, but we could n't be civil to each other, even on the first day when we were wrecked together!"

Having previously stripped to my trousers, in case of accident, I now pulled out. On getting from the channel into the broken water again, I looked over my shoulder to windward, and saw that I was too late. It was coming! — the ship was hidden already in the horrible haze of it. I got the boat's head round to pull back — and I did pull back, just inside the opening in the reef which made the mouth of the channel — when the storm came down on me like death and judgment. The boat filled in an instant, and I was tossed head over heels into the water. The sea, which burst into raging surf upon the rock on either side, rushed in one great roller up the deep channel between them, and took me with it. If the under-tow afterward had lasted for half a minute, I should have been carried into the white water and lost. But a second roller followed the first, almost on the instant, and swept me right up on the beach. I had just strength enough to dig my arms and legs well into the wet sand; and though I was taken back with the backward shift of it, I was not taken into deep water again. Before the

third roller came I was out of its reach, and was down in a sort of swoon on the dry sand.

When I got back to the hollow in shore, where I had left my clothes under shelter with the stores, I found Mr. Clissold snugly crouched up, in the driest place, with the tarpaulin to cover him. "Oh!" says he, in a state of great surprise, "you're not drowned?" "No," says I; "you won't get your double allowance after all." "How much shall I get?" says he, rousing up and looking anxious. "Your fair half-share of what is here," I answered him. "And how long will that last me?" says he. "The food, if you have sense enough to eke it out with what you may find in this miserable place, barely three weeks," says I; "and the water (if you ever drink any) about a fortnight." At hearing that, he took the bottle out of his pocket again, and put it to his lips. "I'm cold to the bones," says I, frowning at him for a drop. "And I'm warm to the marrow," says he, chuckling, and handing me the bottle empty. I pitched it away at once, — or the temptation to break it over his head might have been too much for me, — I pitched it away, and looked into the medicine-chest to see if there was a drop of peppermint, or anything comforting of that sort, inside. Only three physic bottles were left in it, all three being neatly tied over with oil-skin. One of them held a strong white liquor, smelling like hartshorn. The other two were filled with stuff in powder, having the names in printed gibberish pasted outside. On looking a little closer, I found, under some broken divisions of the chest, a small flask covered with wicker-work. "Ginger-Brandy" was written with pen and ink on the wicker-work, and the flask was full! I think that blessed discovery saved me from shivering myself to pieces. After a pull at the flask which made a new man of me, I put it away in my inside breast-pocket; Mr. Clissold watching me with greedy eyes, but saying nothing.

All this while the rain was rushing, the wind roaring, and the sea crashing, as if Noah's Flood had come again. I sat close against the supercargo, because he was in the driest place, and pulled my fair share of the tarpaulin away from him, whether he liked it or not. He by no

means liked it; being in that sort of half-drunken, half-sober state (after finishing his bottle), in which a man's temper is most easily upset by trifles. The upset of *his* temper showed itself in the way of small aggravations, of which I took no notice, till he suddenly bethought himself of angering me by going back again to that dispute about father, which had bred ill-blood between us on the day when we first saw each other. If he had been a younger man, I am afraid I should have stopped him by a punch on the head. As it was, considering his age and the shame of this quarrelling betwixt us when we were both cast away together, I only warned him that I *might* punch his head if he went on. It did just as well, and I 'm glad now to think that it did.

We were huddled so close together that when he coiled himself up to sleep (with a growl), and when he did go to sleep (with a grunt), he growled and grunted into my ear. His rest, like the rest of all the regular drunkards I have ever met with, was broken. He ground his teeth, and talked in his sleep. Among the words he mumbled to himself I heard, as plain as could be, father's name. This vexed, but did not surprise me, seeing that he had been talking of father before he dropped off. But when I made out next, among his mutterings and mumblings, the words "five hundred pound," spoken over and over again, with father's name, now before, now after, now mixed in along with them, I got curious, and listened for more. My listening (and serve me right, you will say) came to nothing; he certainly talked on, but I could n't make out a word more that he said.

When he woke up, I told him plainly he had been talking in his sleep; and mightily taken aback he looked when he first heard it. "What about?" says he. I made answer, "My father, and five hundred pound; and how do you come to couple them together, I should like to know?" "I could n't have coupled them," says he, in a great hurry; "what do I know about it? I don't believe a man like your father ever had such a sum of money as that in all his life." "Don't you?" says I, feeling the aggravation of him, in spite of myself; "I can just tell you my father had such a sum when he was no older a man than I am, — and saved it, — and left it

for a provision, in his will, to my mother, who has got it now, — and, I say again, how came a stranger like you to be talking of it in your sleep?" At hearing this, he went about on the other tack directly. "Was that all your father left after his debts were paid?" says he. "Are you very curious to know?" says I. He took no notice, — he only persisted with his question. "Was it just five hundred pound, no more and no less?" says he. "Suppose it was," says I; "what then?" "O, nothing!" says he, and turns sharp round from me and chuckles to himself. "You're drunk!" says I. "Yes," says he; "that's it, — stick to that, — I'm drunk," — and he chuckles again. Try as I might, and threaten as I might, not another word on the matter of the five hundred pound could I get from him. I bore it well in mind, though, for all that, — it being one of my slow ways not easily to forget anything that has once surprised me, and not to give up returning to it over and over again as time and occasion may serve for the purpose.

The hours wore on, and the storm raged on. We had our half-rations of food when hunger took us (I being much the hungrier of the two); and slept, and grumbled, and quarrelled the weary time out somehow. Toward dusk the wind lessened, and when I got up out of the hollow to look out there was a faint watery break in the western heavens. At times, through the watches of the long night, the stars showed in patches for a little while through the rents that opened and closed by fits in the black sky. When I fell asleep toward the dawning the wind had fallen to a moan, though the sea, slower to go down, sounded as loud as ever. From what I could make of the weather, the storm had by that time as good as blown itself out.

I had been wise enough (knowing who was near me) to lay myself down, whenever I slept, on the side of me which was next to the flask of ginger-brandy stowed away in my breast-pocket. When I woke at sunrise it was the supercargo's hand that roused me up, trying to steal my flask while I was asleep. I rolled him over headlong among the stores, out of which I had the humanity to pull him again with my own hands.

"I'll tell you what," says I, "if us two keep company any longer we sha n't get on smoothly together. You're the oldest man; and you stop here, where we know there is shelter. We will divide the stores fairly, and I'll go and shift for myself at the other end of the island. Do you agree to that?"

"Yes," says he; "and the sooner the better."

I left him for a minute, and went away to look out on the reef that had wrecked us. The splinters of the Peruvian scattered broadcast over the beach, or tossing up and down darkly, far out in the white surf, were all that remained to tell of the ship. I don't deny that my heart sank when I looked at the place where she struck, and saw nothing before me but sea and sky.

But what was the use of standing and looking? It was a deal better to rouse myself by doing something. I returned to Mr. Clissold, and then and there divided the stores into two equal parts, including everything down to the matches in my pocket. Of these parts I gave him first choice. I also left him the whole of the tarpaulin to himself, keeping in my own possession the medicine-chest and the pistol; which last I loaded with powder and shot, in case any sea-birds might fly within reach. When the division was made, and when I had moved my part out of his way and out of his sight, I thought it uncivil to bear malice any longer now that we had agreed to separate. We were cast away on a desert island, and we had death, as well as I could see, within about three weeks' hail of us; but that was no reason for not making things reasonably pleasant as long as we could. I was some time (in consequence of my natural slowness where matters of seafaring duty don't happen to be concerned) before I came to this conclusion. When I did come to it, I acted on it.

"Shake hands before parting," I said, suiting the action to the word.

"No!" says he; "I don't like you."

"Please yourself," says I; and so we parted.

Turning my back on the west, which was his territory according to agreement, I walked away toward the south-east, where the sides of the island rose highest. Here I found a sort of half-rift, half-cavern, in the rocky

banks, which looked as likely a place as any other ; and to this refuge I moved my share of the stores. I thatched it over, as well as I could, with scrub, and heaped up some loose stones at the mouth of it. At home in England I should have been ashamed to put my dog in such a place ; but when a man believes his days to be numbered he is not over-particular about his lodgings, and I was not over-particular about mine.

When my work was done the heavens were fair, the sun was shining, and it was long past noon. I went up again to the high ground, to see what I could make out in the new clearness of the air. North, east, and west there was nothing but sea and sky ; but south I now saw land. It was high, and looked to be a matter of seven or eight miles off. Island or not, it must have been of a good size for me to see it as I did. Known or not known to mariners, it was certainly big enough to have living creatures on it, — animals or men, or both. If I had not lost the boat in my second attempt to reach the vessel we might have easily got to it. But situated as we were now, with no wood to make a boat of but the scattered splinters from the ship, and with no tools to use even that much, there might just as well have been no land in sight at all, so far as we were concerned. The poor hope of a ship coming our road was still the only hope left. To give us all the little chance we might get that way, I now looked about on the beach for the longest morsel of a wrecked spar that I could find, planted it on the high ground, and rigged up to it the one shirt I had on my back for a signal. While coming and going on this job, I noted with great joy that rain-water enough lay in the hollows of the rocks above the sea-line to save our small store of fresh water for a week at least. Thinking it only fair to the supercargo to let him know what I had found out, I went to his territories, after setting up the morsel of a spar, and discreetly shouted my news down to him without showing myself. "Keep to your own side !" was all the thanks I got for this piece of civility. I went back to my own side immediately, and crawled into my little cavern, quite content to be alone. On that first night, strange as it seems now, I once or twice nearly

caught myself feeling happy at the thought of being rid of Mr. Lawrence Clissold.

According to my calculations, — which were made by tying a fresh knot every morning in a piece of marline, — we two men were just a week, each on his own side of the island, without seeing or communicating, anyhow, with one another. The first half of the week I had enough to do with cudgelling my brains for a means of helping ourselves, to keep my mind steady.

I thought first of picking up all the longest bits of spars that had been cast ashore, lashing them together with ropes twisted out of the long grass on the island, and trusting to raft-navigation to get to that high land away in the south. But when I looked among the spars, there were not half a dozen of them left whole enough for the purpose. And even if there had been more, the short allowance of food would not have given me time sufficient, or strength sufficient, to gather the grass, to twist it into ropes, and to lash a raft together big enough and strong enough for us two men. There was nothing to be done but to give up this notion, — and I gave it up. The next chance I thought of was to keep a fire burning on the shore every night, with the wood of the wreck, in case vessels at sea might notice it on one side, or the people of the high land in the south (if the distance was not too great) might notice it on the other. There was sense in this notion, and it could be turned to account the moment the wood was dry enough to burn. The wood got dry enough before the week was out. Whether it was the end of the stormy season in those latitudes, or whether it was only the shifting of the wind to the west, I don't know; but now, day after day, the heavens were clear, and the sun shone scorching hot. The scrub on the island (which was of no great account) dried up, but the fresh water in the hollows of the rocks (which was, on the other hand, a serious business) dried up too. Troubles seldom come alone; and on the day when I made this discovery I also found out that I had calculated wrong about the food. Eke it out as I might, with scurvy grass and roots, there would not be above eight days more of it left when the first week was past; and as for the fresh water, half a pint a day, unless more rain fell, would leave me at the

end of my store, as nearly as I could guess, about the same time.

This was a bad look-out, but I don't think the prospect of it upset me in my mind so much as the having nothing to do. Except for the gathering of the wood, and the lighting of the signal-fire every night, I had no work at all toward the end of the week to keep me steady. I checked myself in thinking much about home, for fear of losing heart, and not holding out to the last, as became a man. For the same reasons I likewise kept my mind from raising hopes of help in me which were not likely to come true. What else was there to think about? Nothing but the man on the other side of the island,—and be hanged to him!

I thought about those words I heard him say in his sleep; I thought about how he was getting on by himself; how he liked nothing but water to drink, and little enough of that; how he was eking out his food; whether he slept much or not; whether he saw the smoke of my fire at night or not; whether he held up better or worse than I did; whether he would be glad to see me if I went to him to make it up; whether he or I would die first; whether if it was me, he would do for me what I would have done for him, namely, bury him, with the last strength I had left. All these things, and lots more, kept coming and going in my mind, till I could stand it no longer. On the morning of the eighth day I roused up to go to his territories, feeling it would do me good to see him and hear him, even if we quarrelled again the instant we set eyes on each other.

I climbed up to the grassy ground; and, when I got there, what should I see but the supercargo himself coming to *my* territories, and wandering up and down in the scrub through not knowing where to find them!

It almost knocked me over, when we met, the man was changed so. He looked eighty years old: the little flesh he had on his miserable face hung baggy; his blue spectacles had dropped down on his nose, and his eyes showed over them wild and red-rimmed; his lips were black; his legs staggered under him. He came up to me with his eyes all of a glare, and put both his hands on my breast, just over the pocket in which I kept that

flask of ginger-brandy which he had tried to steal from me.

"Have you got any of it left?" says he, in a whisper.

"About two mouthfuls," says I.

"Give us one of them, for God's sake," says he.

Giving him one of those mouthfuls was just about equal to giving him a day of my life. In the case of a man I liked, I would not have thought twice about giving it. In the case of Mr. Clissold I did think twice. I would have been a better Christian if I could, but just then I could n't.

He thought I was going to say No. His eyes got cunning directly. He reached his hands to my shoulders, and whispered these words in my ear:—

"I'll tell you what I know about the five hundred pound if you'll give me a drop."

I determined to give it to him, and pulled out the flask. I took his hand, and poured the drop into the hollow of it, and held it for a moment.

"Tell me first," I said, "and drink afterward."

He looked all round him, as if he thought there were people on the island to hear us. "Hush!" he said; "let's whisper about it." The next question and answer that passed between us was louder than before on my side, and softer than ever on his. This was the question, —

"What do you know about the five hundred pound?"

And this was the answer, —

"It's *Stolen Money*!"

My hand dropped away from his as if he had shot me. He instantly fastened on the drop of liquor in the hollow of his hand, like a hungry wild beast on a bone, and then looked up for more. Something in my face (God knows what) seemed suddenly to frighten him out of his life. Before I could stir a step, or get a word out, down he dropped on his knees, whining and whimpering in the high grass at my feet.

"Don't kill me!" says he; "I'm dying, — I'll think of my poor soul. I'll repent while there's time —"

Beginning in that way, he maundered awfully, groveling down in the grass; asking me every other minute for "a drop more, and a drop more"; and talking as if

he thought we were both in England. Out of his wanderings, his beseechings for another drop, and his miserable beggar's-petitions for his "poor soul," I gathered together these words, — the same which I wrote down on the morsel of paper, and of which nine parts out of ten are now rubbed off!

The first I made out — though not the first he said — was that some one, whom he spoke of as "the old man," was alive; and "Lanrean" was the place he lived in. I was to go there, and ask among the old men, for "Tregarthen —"

(At the mention by me of the name of Tregarthen, my brother, to my great surprise, stopped me with a start; made me say the name over more than once; and then, for the first time, told me of the trouble about his sweetheart and his marriage. We waited a little to talk that matter over, after which I went on again with my story, in these words: —)

Well, as I made out from Clissold's wanderings, I was to go to Lanrean, to ask among the old men for Tregarthen, and to say to Tregarthen, "Clissold was the man. Clissold bore no malice; Clissold repented like a Christian, for the sake of his poor soul." No! I was to say something else to Tregarthen. I was to say, "Look among the books; look at the leaf you know of, and see for yourself it's not the right leaf to be there." No! I was to say something else to Tregarthen. I was to say, "The right leaf is hidden, not burned. Clissold had time for everything else, but no time to burn that leaf. Tregarthen came in when he had got the candle lit to burn it. There was just time to let it drop from under his hand into the great crack in the desk, and then he was ordered abroad by the House, and there was no chance of doing more." No! I was to say none of these things to Tregarthen. Only this instead: "Look in Clissold's desk, — and, if you blame anybody, blame Miser Raybrock for driving him to it." And O, another drop, — for the Lord's sake, give him another drop!

So he went on, over and over again, till I found voice enough to speak and stop him.

"Get up and go!" I said to the miserable wretch

“Get back to your own side of the island, or I may do you a mischief, in spite of my own self.”

“Give me another drop and I will,” was all the answer I could get from him.

I threw him the flask. He pounced upon it with a howl. I turned my back, — for I could look at him no longer, — and climbed down again to my cavern on the beach.

I sat down alone on the sand, and tried to quiet myself fit to think about what I had heard. That father could ever have wilfully done anything unbecoming his character as an honest man, was what I would n't believe, in the first place. And that the wretched brute I had just parted from was in his right senses, was what I would n't believe in the second place. What I had myself seen of drinkers, at sea and ashore, helped me to understand the condition into which he had fallen. I knew that when a man who has been a drunkard for years is suddenly cut off his drink, he drops to pieces like, body and mind, for the want of it. I had also heard ship-doctors talk, by some name of their own, of a drink-madness, which we ignorant men call the Horrors. And I made it out, easy enough, that I had seen the supercargo in the first of these conditions ; and that if we both lived long enough without help coming to us, I might soon see him in the second. But when I tried to get farther, and settle how much of what I had heard was wanderings and how much truth, and what it meant if any of it was truth, my slowness got in my way again ; and where a quicker man might have made up his mind in an hour or two, I was all day, in sore distress, making up mine. The upshot of what I settled with myself was, in two words, this : having mother's writing-case handy about me, I determined first to set down for my own self's reminder, all that I had heard. Second, to clear the matter up if ever I got back to England alive ; and if wrong had been done to that old man, or to anybody else, in father's name (without father's knowledge), to make restoration for his sake.

All that day I neither saw nor heard more of the supercargo. I passed a miserable night of it, after writing my memorandum, fighting with my loneliness and my own

thoughts. The remembrance of those words in father's will, saying that the five hundred pound was money which he had once run a risk with, kept putting into my mind suspicions I was ashamed of. When daylight came, I almost felt as if I was going to have the horrors too, and got up to walk them off, if possible, in the morning air.

I kept on the northern side of the island, walking backward and forward for an hour or more. Then I returned to my cavern; and the first thing I saw, on getting near it, was other footsteps than mine marked on the sand. I suspected at once that the supercargo had been lurking about watching me, instead of going back to his own side; and that, in my absence, he had been at his thieving tricks again.

The stores were what I looked at first. The food he had not touched; but the water he had either drunk or wasted, — there was not half a pint of it left. The medicine-chest was open, and the bottle with the hartshorn was gone. When I looked next for the pistol, which I had loaded with powder and shot for the chance of bird-shooting that never came, the pistol was gone too. After making this last discovery, there was but one thing to be done, — namely, to find out where he was, and to take the pistol away from him.

I set off to search first on the western side. It was a beautiful, clear, calm, sunshiny morning; and as I crossed the island, looking out on my left hand and my right, I stopped on a sudden, with my heart in my mouth, as the saying is. Something caught my eye, far out at sea, in the northwest. I looked again, — and there, as true as the heavens above me, I saw a ship, with the sunlight on her top-sails, hull down, on the water-line in the offing!

All thought of the errand I was bent on went out of my mind in an instant. I ran as fast as my weak legs would carry me to the northern beach; gathered up the broken wood which was still lying there plentifully, and, with the help of the dry scrub, lit the largest fire I had made yet. This was the only signal it was in my power to make that there were men on the island. The fire in the bright daylight would never be visible to the ship;

but the smoke curling up from it in the clear sky might be seen, if they had a look-out at the mast-head.

While I was still feeding the fire, and so rapt up in doing it that I had neither eyes nor ears for anything else, I heard the supercargo's voice, on a sudden, at my back. He had stolen on me along the sand. When I faced him he was swinging his arms about in the air, and saying to himself, over and over again, "I see the ship! I see the ship!"

After a little he came close up to me. By the look of him he had been drinking the hartshorn, and it had strung him up a bit, body and mind, for the time. He kept his right hand behind him, as if he was hiding something. I suspected that "something" to be the pistol I was in search of.

"Will the ship come here?" says he.

"Yes, if they see the smoke," says I, keeping my eye on him.

He waited a bit, frowning suspiciously, and looking hard at me all the time.

"What did I say to you yesterday?" he asked.

"What I have got written down here," I made answer, smacking my hand over the writing-case in my breast-pocket; "and what I mean to put to the proof, if the ship sees us and we get back to England."

He whipped his right hand round from behind him like lightning, and snapped the pistol at me. It missed fire. I wrenched it from him in a moment, and was just within one hair's breadth of knocking him on the head with the butt-end afterward. I lifted my hand, — then thought better, and dropped it again.

"No," says I, fixing my eyes on him steadily; "I'll wait till the ship finds us."

He slunk away from me; and, as he slunk, looked hard into the fire. He stopped a minute so, thinking to himself; then he looked back at me again, with some mad mischief in him, that twinkled through his blue spectacles, and grinned on his dry black lips.

"The ship shall never find *you*," he said. With which words he turned himself about toward his own side of the island, and left me.

He only meant that saying to be a threat, — but, bird

of ill-omen that he was, it turned out as good as a prophecy! All my hard work with the fire proved work in vain; all hope was quenched in me long before the embers I had set light to were burned out. Whether the smoke was seen or not from the vessel is more than I can tell. I only know that she filled away on the other tack, not ten minutes after the supercargo left me. In less than an hour's time the last glimpse of the bright topsails had vanished out of view.

I went back to my cavern, — which was now likelier than ever to be my grave as well. In that hot climate, with all the moisture on the island dried up, with not quite so much as a tumblerful of fresh water left, with my strength wasted by living on half-rations of food, — two days more, at most, would see me out. It was hard enough for a man at my age, with all that I had left at home to make life precious, to die such a death as was now before me. It was harder still to have the sting of death sharpened — as I felt it then — by what had just happened between the supercargo and myself. There was no hope now that the wanderings, the day before, had more falsehood than truth in them. The secret he had let out was plainly true enough and serious enough to have scared him into attempting my life, rather than let me keep possession of it, when there was a chance of the ship rescuing us. That secret had father's good name mixed up with it, — and here was I, instead of clearing the villanous darkness from off of it, carrying it with me, black as ever, into my grave.

It was out of the horror I felt at doing that, and out of the yearning of my heart toward you, Alfred, when I thought of it, that the notion came to comfort me, of writing the Message at the top of the paper, and of committing it in the bottle to the sea. Drowning men, they say, catch at straws, — and the straw of comfort I caught at was the one chance in ten thousand that the Message might float till it was picked up, and that it might reach you. My mind might, or might not, have been failing me by this time, — but it is true, either way, that I did feel comforted when I had emptied one of the two bottles left in the medicine-chest, had put the paper inside, had tied the stopper carefully over with the oil-

skin, and had laid the whole by in my pocket, ready, when I felt my time coming, to drop into the sea. I was rid of the secret, I thought to myself; and, if it pleased God, I was rid of it, Alfred, to you.

The day waned, and the sun set, all cloudless and golden, in a dead calm. There was not a ripple anywhere on the long oily heaving of the sea. Before night came I strengthened myself with a better meal than usual as to food, — for where was the use of keeping meat and biscuit when I had not water enough to last along with them? When the stars came out and the moon rose I gathered the wood together and lit the signal-fire, according to custom, on the beach outside my cavern. I had no hope from it, — but the fire was company to me; the looking into it quieted my thoughts, and the crackling of it was a relief in the silence. I don't know why it was, but the breathless stillness of that night had something awful in it, and went near to frightening me.

The moon got high in the heavens, and the light of her lay all in a flood on the sand before me, on the rocks that jutted out from it, and on the calm sea beyond. I was thinking of Margaret, — wondering if the moon was shining on our little bay at Steepways, and if she was looking at it too, — when I saw a man's shadow steal over the white of the sand. He was lurking near me again! In a minute he came into view. The moonshine glinted on his blue spectacles, and glimmered on his bald head. He stopped as he passed by the rocks and looked about for a loose stone; he found a large one, and came straight with it on tiptoe up to the fire. I showed myself to him on a sudden, in the red of the flame, with the pistol in my hand. He dropped the stone and shrank back at the sight of it. When he was close to the sea he stopped, and screamed out at me, "The ship's coming! The ship's coming! The ship shall never find *you*!" That notion of the ship, and that other notion of killing me before help came to us, seemed never to have left him. When he turned, and went back by the way he had come, he was still shouting out those same words. For a quarter of an hour or more I heard him, till the silence swallowed up his ravings, and led me back again to my thoughts of home.

Those thoughts kept with me till the moon was on the wane. It was darker now, and stiller than ever. I had not fed the signal-fire for half an hour or more, and had roused myself up, at the mouth of the cavern, to do it, when I saw the dying gleams of moonshine over the sea on either side of me change color and turn red. Black shadows, as from low-flying clouds, swept after each other over the deepening redness. The air grew hot, — a sound came nearer and nearer, from above me and behind me, like the rush of wind and the roar of water, both together, and both far off. I ran out on to the sand and looked back. The island was on fire !

On fire at the point of it opposite to me, — on fire in one great sheet of flame that stretched right across the island, and bore down on me steadily before the light westerly wind which was blowing at the time. Only one hand could have kindled that terrible flame, — the hand of the lost wretch who had left me, with the mad threat on his lips and the murderous notion of burning me out of my refuge, working in his crazy brain. On his side of the island (where the fire had begun), the dry grass and scrub grew all round the little hollow in the earth which I had left to him for his place of refuge. If he had had a thousand lives to lose he would have lost that thousand already !

Having nothing to feed on but the dry scrub, the flame swept forward with such a frightful swiftness that I had barely time, after mastering my own scattered senses, to turn back into the cavern to get my last drink of water and my last mouthful of food, before I heard the fiery scorch crackling over the thatched roof which my own hands had raised. I ran across the beach to the spur of rock which jutted out into the sea, and there crouched down on the farthest edge I could reach to. There was nothing for the fire to lay hold of between me and the top of the island bank. I was far enough away to be out of the lick of the flames, and low enough down to get air under the sweep of the smoke. You may well wonder why, with death by starvation threatening me close at hand, I should have schemed and struggled as I did to save myself from a quicker death by suffocation in the smoke. I can only answer to that, that I wonder too, — but so it was.

The flames ate their way to the edge of the bank, and lapped over it as if they longed to lick me up. The heat scorched nearer than I had thought, and the smoke poured lower and thicker. I lay down sick and weak on the rock, with my face close over the calm, cool water. When I ventured to lift myself up again, the top of the island was of a ruby red, the smoke rose slowly in little streams, and the air above was quivering with the heat. While I looked at it I felt a kind of surging and singing in my head, and a deadly faintness and coldness crept all over me. I took the bottle that held the Message from my pocket, and dropped it into the sea, — then crawled a little way back over the rocks, and fell forward on them before I could get as far as the sand. The last I remember was trying to say my prayers, — losing the words, — losing my sight, — losing the sense of where I was, — losing everything.

The day was breaking again when I was roused up by feeling rough hands on me. Naked savages — some on the rocks, some in the water, some in two long canoes — were clamoring and crowding about on all sides. They bound me and took me off at once to one of the canoes. The other kept company, and both were paddled back to that high land which I had seen in the south. Death had passed me by once more, and Captivity had come in its place.

The story of my life among the savages, having no concern with the matter now in hand, may be passed by here in few words. They had seen the fire on the island; and paddling over to reconnoitre, had found me. Not one of them had ever set eyes on a white man before. I was taken away to be shown about among them for a curiosity. When they were tired of showing me, they spared my life, finding my knowledge and general handiness as a civilized man useful to them in various ways. I lost all count of time in my captivity, and can only guess now that it lasted more than one year and less than two. I made two attempts to escape, each time in a canoe, and was balked in both. Nobody at home in England would ever, as I believe, have seen me again if an outward-bound vessel had not touched at the little desert island for fresh water. Finding none there she came on to the

territory of the savages (which was an island too). When they took me on board I looked little better than a savage myself, and could hardly talk my own language. By the help of the kindness shown to me I was right again by the time we spoke the first ship homeward-bound. To that vessel I was transferred; and in her I worked my passage back to Falmouth.

CHAPTER V.

THE RESTITUTION.

CAPTAIN JORGAN, up and out betimes, had put the whole village of Lanrean under an amicable cross-examination, and was returning to the King Arthur's Arms to breakfast, none the wiser for his trouble, when he beheld the young fisherman advancing to meet him accompanied by a stranger. A glance at this stranger assured the captain that he could be no other than the Seafaring Man; and the captain was about to hail him as a fellow-craftsman, when the two stood still and silent before the captain, and the captain stood still, silent, and wondering before them.

"Why, what's this?" cried the captain, when at last he broke the silence. "You two are alike. You two are much alike! What's this?"

Not a word was answered on the other side, until after the seafaring brother had got hold of the captain's right hand, and the fisherman brother had got hold of the captain's left hand; and if ever the captain had had his fill of hand-shaking, from his birth to that hour, he had it then. And presently up and spoke the two brothers, one at a time, two at a time, two dozen at a time for the bewilderment into which they plunged the captain, until he gradually had Hugh Raybrock's deliverance made clear to him, and also unravelled the fact that the person referred to in the half-obliterated paper was Tregarthen himself.

"Formerly, dear Captain Jorgan," said Alfred, "of Lanrean, you recollect? Kitty and her father came to live at Steepways after Hugh shipped on his last voyage."

"Ay, ay!" cried the captain, fetching a breath. "Now you have me in tow. Then your brother here don't know his sister-in-law that is to be so much as by name?"

"Never saw her; never heard of her!"

"Ay, ay, ay!" cried the captain. "Why then we every one go back together—paper, writer, and all—and take Tregarthen into the secret we kept from him?"

"Surely," said Alfred, "we can't help it now. We must go through with our duty."

"Not a doubt," returned the captain. "Give me an arm apiece, and let us set this ship-shape."

So walking up and down in the shrill wind on the wild moor, while the neglected breakfast cooled within, the captain and the brothers settled their course of action.

It was that they should all proceed by the quickest means they could secure to Barnstaple, and there look over the father's books and papers in the lawyer's keeping; as Hugh had proposed to himself to do if ever he reached home. That, enlightened or unenlightened, they should then return to Steepways and go straight to Mr. Tregarthen, and tell him all they knew, and see what came of it, and act accordingly. Lastly, that when they got there they should enter the village with all precautions against Hugh's being recognized by any chance; and that to the captain should be consigned the task of preparing his wife and mother for his restoration to this life.

"For you see," quoth Captain Jorgan, touching the last head, "it requires caution any way, great joys being as dangerous as great griefs, if not more dangerous, as being more uncommon (and therefore less provided against) in this round world of ours. And besides, I should like to free my name with the ladies, and take you home again at your brightest and luckiest; so don't let's throw away a chance of success."

The captain was highly lauded by the brothers for his kind interest and foresight.

"And now stop!" said the captain, coming to a stand-still, and looking from one brother to the other, with quite a new rigging of wrinkles about each eye; "you are of opinion," to the elder, "that you are rather slow?"

"I assure you I am very slow," said the honest Hugh.

"Wa'al," replied the captain, "I assure *you* that to the best of my belief I am ra'ather smart. Now a slow man ain't good at quick business, is he?"

That was clear to both.

"You," said the captain, turning to the younger brother, "are a little in love; ain't you?"

"Not a little, Captain Jorgan."

"Much or little, you 're sort preoccupied; ain't you?"

It was impossible to be denied.

"And a sort preoccupied man ain't good at quick business, is he?" said the captain.

Equally clear on all sides.

"Now," said the captain, "I ain't in love myself, and I've made many a smart run across the ocean, and I should like to carry on and go ahead with this affair of yours and make a run slick through it. Shall I try? Will you hand it over to me?"

They were both delighted to do so, and thanked him heartily.

"Good," said the captain, taking out his watch. This is half past eight A. M., Friday morning. I'll jot that down, and we'll compute how many hours we've been out when we run into your mother's post-office. There! The entry's made, and now we go ahead."

They went ahead so well that before the Barnstaple lawyer's office was open next morning, the captain was sitting whistling on the step of the door, waiting for the clerk to come down the street with his key and open it. But instead of the clerk there came the master, with whom the captain fraternized on the spot to an extent that utterly confounded him.

As he personally knew both Hugh and Alfred, there was no difficulty in obtaining immediate access to such of the father's papers as were in his keeping. These were chiefly old letters and cash accounts; from which the captain with a shrewdness and despatch that left the lawyer far behind, established with perfect clearness, by noon, the following particulars:—

That one Lawrence Clissold had borrowed of the deceased, at a time when he was a thriving young tradesman in the town of Barnstaple, the sum of five hundred pounds. That he had borrowed it on the written state-

ment that it was to be laid out in furtherance of a speculation which he expected would raise him to independence ; he being, at the time of writing that letter, no more than a clerk in the house of Dringworth Brothers, America Square, London. That the money was borrowed for a stipulated period ; but that, when the term was out, the aforesaid speculation failed, and Clissold was without means of repayment. That, hereupon, he had written to his creditor, in no very persuasive terms, vaguely requesting further time. That the creditor had refused this concession, declaring that he could not afford delay. That Clissold then paid the debt, accompanying the remittance of the money with an angry letter describing it as having been advanced by a relative to save him from ruin. That, in acknowledging the receipt, Raybrock had cautioned Clissold to seek to borrow money of him no more, as he would never so risk money again.

Before the lawyer the captain said never a word in reference to these discoveries. But when the papers had been put back in their box, and he and his two companions were well out of the office, his right leg suffered for it, and he said, —

“ So far this run ’s begun with a fair wind and a prosperous ; for don’t you see that all this agrees with that dutiful trust in his father maintained by the slow member of the Raybrock family ? ”

Whether the brothers had seen it before or no, they saw it now. Not that the captain gave them much time to contemplate the state of things at their ease, for he instantly whipped them into a chaise again, and bore them off to Steepways. Although the afternoon was but just beginning to decline when they reached it, and it was broad daylight, still they had no difficulty, by dint of muffling the returned sailor up, and ascending the village rather than descending it, in reaching Tregarthen’s cottage unobserved. Kitty was not visible, and they surprised Tregarthen sitting writing in the small bay-window of his little room.

“ Sir,” said the captain, instantly shaking hands with him, pen and all, “ I ’m glad to see you, sir. How do you do, sir ? I told you you ’d think better of me by and by, and I congratulate you on going to do it.”

Here the captain's eye fell on Tom Pettifer Ho, engaged in preparing some cookery at the fire.

"That critter," said the captain, smiting his leg, "is a born steward, and never ought to have been in any other way of life. Stop where you are, Tom, and make yourself useful. Now, Tregarthen, I'm going to try a chair."

Accordingly the captain drew one close to him, and went on:—

"This loving member of the Raybrock family you know, sir. This slow member of the same family, you don't know, sir. Wa'al, these two are brothers,—fact! Hugh's come to life again, and here he stands. Now see here, my friend! You don't want to be told that he was cast away, but you do want to be told (for there's a purpose in it) that he was cast away with another man. That man by name was Lawrence Clissold."

At the mention of this name Tregarthen started and changed color. "What's the matter?" said the captain.

"He was a fellow-clerk of mine, thirty — five-and-thirty — years ago."

"True," said the captain, immediately catching at the clew: "Dringworth Brothers, America Square, London City."

The other started again, nodded, and said, "That was the house."

"Now," pursued the captain, "between those two men cast away there arose a mystery concerning the round sum of five hundred pound."

Again Tregarthen started, changing color. Again the captain said, "What's the matter?"

As Tregarthen only answered, "Please to go on," the captain recounted, very tersely and plainly, the nature of Clissold's wanderings on the barren island, as he had condensed them in his mind from the seafaring man. Tregarthen became greatly agitated during this recital, and at length exclaimed, —

"Clissold was the man who ruined me! I have suspected it for many a long year, and now I know it."

"And how," said the captain, drawing his chair still closer to Tregarthen, and clapping his hand upon his shoulder, — "how may you know it?"

"When we were fellow-clerks," replied Tregarthen, "in that London house, it was one of my duties to enter daily in a certain book an account of the sums received that day by the firm, and afterward paid into the banker's. One memorable day, — a Wednesday, the black day of my life, — among the sums I so entered was one of five hundred pounds."

"I begin to make it out," said the captain. "Yes?"

"It was one of Clissold's duties to copy from this entry a memorandum of the sums which the clerk employed to go to the bankers paid in there. It was my duty to hand the money to Clissold; it was Clissold's to hand it to the clerk, with that memorandum of his writing. On that Wednesday I entered a sum of five hundred pounds received. I handed that sum, as I handed the other sums in the day's entry, to Clissold. I was absolutely certain of it at the time; I have been absolutely certain of it ever since. A sum of five hundred pounds was afterward found by the house to have been that day wanting from the bag, from Clissold's memorandum, and from the entries in my book. Clissold, being questioned, stood upon his perfect clearness in the matter, and emphatically declared that he asked no better than to be tested by 'Tregarthen's book.' My book was examined, and the entry of five hundred pounds was not there."

"How not there," said the captain, "when you made it yourself?"

Tregarthen continued:—

"I was then questioned. Had I made the entry? Certainly I had. The house produced my book, and it was not there. I could not deny my book; I could not deny my writing. I knew there must be forgery by some one; but the writing was wonderfully like mine, and I could impeach no one if the house could not. I was required to pay the money back. I did so; and I left the house, almost broken-hearted, rather than remain there, — even if I could have done so, — with a dark shadow of suspicion always on me. I returned to my native place, Lanrean, and remained there, clerk to a mine, until I was appointed to my little post here."

"I well remember," said the captain, "that I told you

that if you had had no experience of ill judgments on deceiving appearances, you were a lucky man. You went hurt at that, and I see why. I 'm sorry."

"Thus it is," said Tregarthen. "Of my own innocence I have of course been sure; it has been at once my comfort and my trial. Of Clissold I have always had suspicions almost amounting to certainty; but they have never been confirmed until now. For my daughter's sake and for my own I have carried this subject in my own heart, as the only secret of my life, and have long believed that it would die with me."

"Wa'al, my good sir," said the captain, cordially, "the present question is, and will be long, I hope, concerning living, and not dying. Now, here are our two honest friends, the loving Raybrock and the slow. Here they stand, agreed on one point, on which I 'd back 'em round the world, and right across it from north to south, and then again from east to west, and through it, from your deepest Cornish mine to China. It is, that they will never use this same so-often-mentioned sum of money, and that restitution of it must be made to you. These two, the loving member and the slow, for the sake of the right and of their father's memory, will have it ready for you to-morrow. Take it, and ease their minds and mine, and end a most unfort'nate transaction."

Tregarthen took the captain by the hand, and gave his hand to each of the young men, but positively and finally answered No. He said, they trusted to his word, and he was glad of it, and at rest in his mind; but there was no proof, and the money must remain as it was. All were very earnest over this; and earnestness in men, when they are right and true, is so impressive, that Mr. Pettifer deserted his cookery and looked on quite moved.

"And so," said the captain, "so we come—as that lawyer-crittur over yonder where we were this morning might,—to mere proof; do we? We must have it; must we? How? From this Clissold's wanderings, and from what you say, it ain't hard to make out that there was a neat forgery of your writing committed by the too smart Rowdy that was grease and ashes when I made his acquaintance, and a substitution of a forged leaf in your book for a real and true leaf torn out. Now

was that real and true leaf then and there destroyed? No, — for says he, in his drunken way, he slipped it into a crack in his own desk, because you came into the office before there was time to burn it, and could never get back to it arterwards. Wait a bit. Where is that desk now? Do you consider it likely to be in America Square, London City?”

Tregarthen shook his head.

“The house has not, for years, transacted business in that place. I have heard of it and read of it, as removed, enlarged, every way altered. Things alter so fast in these times.”

“You think so,” returned the captain, with compassion; “but you should come over and see *me* afore you talk about *that*. Wa’al, now. This desk, this paper, — this paper, this desk,” said the captain, ruminating and walking about, and looking, in his uneasy abstraction, into Mr. Pettifer’s hat on a table, among other things. “This desk, this paper, — this paper, this desk,” the captain continued, musing and roaming about the room, “I’d give —”

However, he gave nothing, but took up his steward’s hat instead, and stood looking into it, as if he had just come into Church. After that he roamed again, and again said, “This desk, belonging to this House of Dringworth Brothers, America Square, London City —”

Mr. Pettifer, still strangely moved, and now more moved than before, cut the captain off as he backed across the room, and bespake him thus: —

“Captain Jorgan, I have been wishful to engage your attention, but I could n’t do it. I am unwilling to interrupt, Captain Jorgan, but I must do it. *I* know something about that house.”

The captain stood stock-still, and looked at him, — with his (Mr. Pettifer’s) hat under his arm.

“You’re aware,” pursued his steward, “that I was once in the broking business, Captain Jorgan?”

“I was aware,” said the captain, “that you had failed in that calling, and in half the businesses going, Tom.”

“Not quite so, Captain Jorgan; but I failed in the broking business. I was partners with my brother, sir. There was a sale of old office furniture at Dringworth

Brothers when the house was moved from America Square, and me and my brother made what we call in the trade a Deal there, sir. And I'll make bold to say, sir, that the only thing I ever had from my brother, or from any relation, — for my relations have mostly taken property from me instead of giving me any, — was an old desk we bought at that same sale, with a crack in it. My brother would n't have given me even that, when we broke partnership, if it had been worth anything."

"Where is that desk now?" said the captain.

"Well, Captain Jorgan," replied the steward, "I could n't say for certain where it is now; but when I saw it last, — which was last time we were outward-bound, — it was at a very nice lady's at Wapping, along with a little chest of mine which was detained for a small matter of a bill owing."

The captain, instead of paying that rapt attention to his steward which was rendered by the other three persons present, went to Church again, in respect of the steward's hat. And a most especially agitated and memorable face the captain produced from it, after a short pause.

"Now, Tom," said the captain; "I spoke to you, when we first came here, respecting your constitutional weakness on the subject of sunstroke."

"You did, sir."

"Will my slow friend," said the captain, "lend me his arm, or I shall sink right back'ards into this blessed steward's cookery? Now, Tom," pursued the captain, when the required assistance was given, "on your oath as a steward, did n't you take that desk to pieces to make a better one of it, and put it together fresh, — or something of the kind?"

"On my oath I did, sir," replied the steward.

"And by the blessing of Heaven, my friends, one and all," cried the captain, radiant with joy, — "of the Heaven that put it into this Tom Pettifer's head to take so much care of his head against the bright sun, — he lined his hat with the original leaf in Tregarthen's writing, — and here it is!"

With that the captain, to the utter destruction of Mr. Pettifer's favorite hat, produced the book-leaf, very much

worn, but still legible, and gave both his legs such tremendous slaps that they were heard far off in the bay, and never accounted for.

"A quarter past five p. m.," said the captain, pulling out his watch, "and that's thirty-three hours and a quarter in all, and a pritty run!"

How they were all overpowered with delight and triumph; how the money was restored, then and there, to Tregarthen; how Tregarthen, then and there, gave it all to his daughter; how the captain undertook to go to Dringworth Brothers and re-establish the reputation of their forgotten old clerk; how Kitty came in, and was nearly torn to pieces, and the marriage was reappointed, needs not to be told. Nor how she and the young fisherman went home to the post-office to prepare the way for the captain's coming, by declaring him to be the mightiest of men, who had made all their fortunes, — and then dutifully withdrew together, in order that he might have the domestic coast entirely to himself. How he availed himself of it is all that remains to tell.

Deeply delighted with his trust, and putting his heart into it, he raised the latch of the post-office parlor where Mrs. Raybrock and the young widow sat, and said, —

"May I come in?"

"Sure you may, Captain Jorgan!" replied the old lady. "And good reason you have to be free of the house, though you have not been too well used in it by some who ought to have known better. I ask your pardon."

"No, you don't, ma'am," said the captain, "for I won't let you. Wa'al, to be sure!" By this time he had taken a chair on the hearth between them.

"Never felt such an evil spirit in the whole course of my life! There! I tell you! I could a'most have cut my own connection. Like the dealer in my country, away West, who when he had let himself be outdone in a bargain, said to himself, 'Now I tell you what! I'll never speak to you again.' And he never did, but joined a settlement of oysters, and translated the multiplication-table into their language, — which is a fact that can be proved. If you doubt it, mention it to any oyster you come across, and see if he'll have the face to contradict it."

He took the child from her mother's lap and set it on his knee.

"Not a bit afraid of me now, you see. Knows I am fond of small people. I have a child, and she's a girl, and I sing to her sometimes."

"What do you sing?" asked Margaret.

"Not a long song, my dear.

Silas Jorgan
Played the organ.

That's about all. And sometimes I tell her stories, — stories of sailors supposed to be lost, and recovered after all hope was abandoned." Here the captain musingly went back to his song, —

Silas Jorgan
Played the organ;

repeating it with his eyes on the fire, as he softly danced the child on his knee. For he felt that Margaret had stopped working.

"Yes," said the captain, still looking at the fire. "I make up stories and tell 'em to that child. Stories of shipwreck on desert island, and long delay in getting back to civilized lands. It is to stories the like of that, mostly, that

Silas Jorgan
Plays the organ."

There was no light in the room but the light of the fire; for the shades of night were on the village, and the stars had begun to peep out of the sky one by one, as the houses of the village peeped out from among the foliage when the night departed. The captain felt that Margaret's eyes were upon him, and thought it discreetest to keep his own eyes on the fire.

"Yes; I make 'em up," said the captain. "I make up stories of brothers brought together by the good providence of God. Of sons brought back to mothers, — husbands brought back to wives, — fathers raised from the deep, for little children like herself."

Margaret's touch was on his arm, and he could not choose but look round now. Next moment her hand moved imploringly to his breast, and she was on her

knees before him, — supporting the mother, who was also kneeling.

“What’s the matter?” said the captain. “What’s the matter?”

Silas Jorgan
Played the — ”

Their looks and tears were too much for him, and he could not finish the song, short as it was.

“Mistress Margaret, you have borne ill fortune well. Could you bear good fortune equally well, if it was to come?”

“I hope so. I thankfully and humbly and earnestly hope so!”

“Wa’al. my dear,” said the captain, “p’r’aps it has come. He s — don’t be frightened — shall I say the word

“Alive?”

“Yes!”

The thanks they fervently addressed to Heaven were again too much for the captain, who openly took out his handkerchief and dried his eyes.

“He’s no further off,” resumed the captain, “than my country. Indeed, he’s no further off than his own native country. To tell you the truth, he’s no further off than Falmouth. Indeed, I doubt if he’s quite so fur. Indeed, if you was sure you could bear it nicely, and I was to do no more than whistle for him — ”

The captain’s trust was discharged. A rush came, and they were all together again.

This was a fine opportunity for Tom Pettifer to appear with a tumbler of cold water, and he presently appeared with it, and administered it to the ladies; at the same time soothing them, and composing their dresses, exactly as if they had been passengers crossing the Channel. The extent to which the captain slapped his legs, when Mr. Pettifer acquitted himself of this act of stewardship, could have been thoroughly appreciated by no one but himself; inasmuch as he must have slapped them black and blue, and they must have smarted tremendously.

He couldn’t stay for the wedding, having a few appointments to keep at the irreconcilable distance of about four thousand miles. So next morning all the village

cheered him up to the level ground above, and there he shook hands with a complete Census of its population, and invited the whole without exception, to come and stay several months with him at Salem, Mass., U. S. And there as he stood on the spot where he had seen that little golden picture of love and parting, and from which he could that morning contemplate another golden picture with a vista of golden years in it, little Kitty put her arms around his neck, and kissed him on both his bronzed cheeks, and laid her pretty face upon his storm-beaten breast, in sight of all, — ashamed to have called such a noble captain names. And there the captain waved his hat over his head three final times ; and there he was last seen, going away accompanied by Tom Pettifer Ho, and carrying his hands in his pockets. And there, before that ground was softened with the fallen leaves of three more summers, a rosy little boy took his first unsteady run to a fair young mother's breast, and the name of that infant fisherman was Jorgan Raybrock.

FULL REPORT

OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MUDFOG ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EVERYTHING.

WE have made the most unparalleled and extraordinary exertions to place before our readers a complete and accurate account of the proceedings at the late grand meeting of the Mudfog Association, holden in the town of Mudfog ; it affords us great happiness to lay the result before them, in the shape of various communications received from our able, talented, and graphic correspondent, expressly sent down for the purpose, who has immortalized us, himself, Mudfog, and the association, all at one and the same time. We have been, indeed, for some days unable to determine who will transmit the greatest name to posterity, — ourselves, who sent our correspondent down ; our correspondent, who wrote an account of the matter ; or the association, who gave our correspondent something to write about. We rather incline to the opinion that we are the greatest man of the party, inasmuch as the notion of an exclusive and authentic report originated with us ; this may be prejudice ; it may arise from a prepossession on our part in our own favor. Be it so. We have no doubt that every gentleman concerned in this mighty assemblage is troubled with the same complaint in a greater or less degree ; and it is a consolation to us to know that we have at least this feeling in common with the great scientific stars, the brilliant and extraordinary luminaries, whose speculations we record.

We give our correspondent's letters in the order in which they reached us. Any attempt at amalgamating them into one beautiful whole would only destroy that glowing tone, that dash of wildness, and rich vein of picturesque interest, which pervade them throughout.

“MUDFOG, Monday night, seven o’clock.

“We are in a state of great excitement here. Nothing is spoken of but the approaching meeting of the association. The inn-doors are thronged with waiters anxiously looking for the expected arrivals ; and the numerous bills which are wafered up in the windows of private houses, intimating that there are beds to let within, give the streets a very animated and cheerful appearance, the wafers being of a great variety of colors, and the monotony of printed inscriptions being relieved by every possible size and style of handwriting. It is confidently rumored that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy have engaged three beds and a sitting-room at the Pig and Tinder-Box. I give you the rumor as it has reached me ; but I cannot, as yet, vouch for its accuracy. The moment I have been enabled to obtain any certain information upon this interesting point, you may depend upon receiving it.”

“Half past seven.

“I have just returned from a personal interview with the landlord of the Pig and Tinder-Box. He speaks confidently of the probability of Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy taking up their residence at his house during the sitting of the association, but denies that the beds have been yet engaged ; in which representation he is confirmed by the chambermaid, — a girl of artless manners and interesting appearance. The boots denies that it is at all likely that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy will put up here ; but I have reason to believe that this man has been suborned by the proprietor of the Original Pig, which is the opposition hotel. Amidst such conflicting testimony it is difficult to arrive at the real truth ; but you may depend upon receiving authentic information upon this point the moment the fact is ascertained. The excitement still continues. A boy fell through the window of the pastrycook’s shop at the corner of the High Street about an hour ago, which has occasioned much confusion. The general impression is, that it was an accident. Pray Heaven it may prove so !”

“Tuesday noon.

“At an early hour this morning the bells of all the

churches struck seven o'clock ; the effect of which, in the present lively state of the town, was extremely singular. While I was at breakfast, a yellow gig, drawn by a dark gray horse, with a patch of white over his right eyelid, proceeded at a rapid pace in the direction of the Original Pig stables ; it is currently reported that this gentleman has arrived here for the purpose of attending the association, and, from what I have heard, I consider it extremely probable, although nothing decisive is yet known regarding him. You may conceive the anxiety with which we are all looking forward to the arrival of the four o'clock coach this afternoon.

" Notwithstanding the excited state of the populace, no outrage has yet been committed, owing to the admirable discipline and discretion of the police, who are nowhere to be seen. A barrel-organ is playing opposite my window, and groups of people, offering fish and vegetables for sale, parade the streets. With these exceptions everything is quiet, and I trust will continue so."

" Five o'clock.

" It is now ascertained beyond all doubt that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy will *not* repair to the Pig and Tinder-Box, but have actually engaged apartments at the Original Pig. This intelligence is *exclusive* ; and I leave you and your readers to draw their own inferences from it. Why Professor Wheezy, of all people in the world, should repair to the Original Pig in preference to the Pig and Tinder-Box, it is not easy to conceive. The professor is a man who should be above all such petty feelings. Some people here openly impute treachery and a distinct breach of faith to Professors Snore and Doze ; while others, again, are disposed to acquit them of any culpability in the transaction, and to insinuate that the blame rests solely with Professor Wheezy. I own that I incline to the latter opinion ; and, although it gives me great pain to speak in terms of censure or disapprobation of a man of such transcendent genius and acquirements, still I am bound to say, that if my suspicions be well founded, and if all the reports which have reached my ears be true, I really do not well know what to make of the matter.

"Mr. Slug, so celebrated for his statistical researches, arrived this afternoon by the four o'clock stage. His complexion is a dark purple, and he has a habit of sighing constantly. He looked extremely well, and appeared in high health and spirits. Mr. Woodensconce also came down in the same conveyance. The distinguished gentleman was fast asleep on his arrival, and I am informed by the guard that he had been so the whole way. He was, no doubt, preparing for his approaching fatigues; but what gigantic visions must those be, that flit through the brain of such a man, when his body is in a state of torpidity!

"The influx of visitors increases every moment. I am told (I know not how truly) that two post-chaises have arrived at the Original Pig within the last half-hour; and I myself observed a wheelbarrow, containing three carpet-bags and a bundle, entering the yard of the Pig and Tinder-Box no longer ago than five minutes since. The people are still quietly pursuing their ordinary occupations; but there is a wildness in their eyes, and an unwonted rigidity in the muscles of their countenances, which shows to the observant spectator that their expectations are strained to the very utmost pitch. I fear, unless some very extraordinary arrivals take place to-night, that consequences may arise from this popular ferment, which every man of sense and feeling would deplore."

"Twenty minutes past six.

"I have just heard that the boy who fell through the pastrycook's window last night has died of the fright. He was suddenly called upon to pay three and sixpence for the damage done, and his constitution, it seems, was not strong enough to bear up against the shock. The inquest, it is said, will be held to-morrow."

"Three quarters past seven.

"Professors Muff and Nogo have just driven up to the hotel door; they at once ordered dinner with great condescension. We are all very much delighted with the urbanity of their manners, and the ease with which they adapt themselves to the forms and ceremonies of ordinary life. Immediately on their arrival they sent for the head-

waiter, and privately requested him to purchase a live dog, — as cheap a one as he could meet with, — and to send him up after dinner, with a pie-board, a knife and fork, and a clean plate. It is conjectured that some experiments will be tried upon the dog to-night; if any particulars should transpire I will forward them by express."

"Half past eight.

"The animal has been procured. He is a pug-dog, of rather intelligent appearance, in good condition, and with very short legs. He has been tied to a curtain-peg in a dark room, and is howling dreadfully."

"Ten minutes to nine.

"The dog has just been rung for. With an instinct which would appear almost the result of reason, the sagacious animal seized the waiter by the calf of the leg when he approached to take him and made a desperate though ineffectual resistance. I have not been able to procure admission to the apartment occupied by the scientific gentlemen; but, judging from the sounds which reached my ears when I stood upon the landing-place just now outside the door, I should be disposed to say that the dog had retreated growling beneath some article of furniture, and was keeping the professors at bay. This conjecture is confirmed by the testimony of the ostler, who, after peeping through the key-hole, assures me that he distinctly saw Professor Nogo on his knees, holding forth a small bottle of prussic acid, to which the animal, who was crouched beneath an arm-chair, obstinately declined to smell. You cannot imagine the feverish state of irritation we are in, lest the interests of science should be sacrificed to the prejudices of a brute creature, who is not endowed with sufficient sense to foresee the incalculable benefits which the whole human race may derive from so very slight a concession on his part."

"Nine o'clock.

"The dog's tail and ears have been sent down stairs to be washed; from which circumstance we infer that the animal is no more. His forelegs have been delivered to

the boots to be brushed, which strengthens the supposition."

"Half after ten.

"My feelings are so overpowered by what has taken place in the course of the last hour and a half, that I have scarcely strength to detail the rapid succession of events which have quite bewildered all those who are cognizant of their occurrence. It appears that the pug-dog mentioned in my last was surreptitiously obtained, — stolen, in fact, — by some person attached to the stable department, from an unmarried lady resident in this town. Frantic on discovering the loss of her favorite, the lady rushed distractedly into the street, calling in the most heart-rending and pathetic manner upon the passengers to restore her her Augustus, — for so the deceased was named, in affectionate remembrance of a former lover of his mistress, to whom he bore a striking personal resemblance, which renders the circumstance additionally affecting. I am not yet in a condition to inform you what circumstances induced the bereaved lady to direct her steps to the hotel which had witnessed the last struggles of her *protégé*. I can only state that she arrived there, at the very instant when his detached members were passing through the passage on a small tray. Her shrieks still reverberate in my ears! I grieve to say that the expressive features of Professor Muff were much scratched and lacerated by the injured lady; and that Professor Nogo, besides sustaining several severe bites, has lost some handfuls of hair from the same cause. It must be some consolation to these gentlemen to know that their ardent attachment to scientific pursuits has alone occasioned these unpleasant consequences; for which the sympathy of a grateful country will sufficiently reward them. The unfortunate lady remains at the Pig and Tinder-Box, and up to this time is reported in a very precarious state.

"I need scarcely tell you that this unlooked-for catastrophe has cast a damp and gloom upon us in the midst of our exhilaration; natural in any case, but greatly enhanced in this, by the amiable qualities of the deceased animal, who appears to have been much and deservedly respected by the whole of his acquaintance."

“Twelve o’clock.

“I take the last opportunity before sealing my parcel to inform you that the boy who fell through the pastry-cook’s window is not dead, as was universally believed, but alive and well. The report appears to have had its origin in his mysterious disappearance. He was found half an hour since on the premises of a sweet-stuff maker, where a raffle had been announced for a second-hand seal-skin cap and a tambourine; and where — a sufficient number of members not having been obtained at first — he had patiently waited until the list was completed. This fortunate discovery has in some degree restored our gayety and cheerfulness. It is proposed to get up a subscription for him without delay.

“Everybody is nervously anxious to see what to-morrow will bring forth. If any one should arrive in the course of the night, I have left strict directions to be called immediately. I should have sat up, indeed, but the agitating events of this day have been too much for me.

“No news, yet, of either of the Professors Snore, Doze, or Wheezy. It is very strange!”

“Wednesday afternoon.

“All is now over; and, upon one point at least, I am at length enabled to set the minds of your readers at rest. The three professors arrived at ten minutes after two o’clock, and, instead of taking up their quarters at the Original Pig, as it was universally understood in the course of yesterday that they would assuredly have done, drove straight to the Pig and Tinder-Box, where they threw off the mask at once, and openly announced their intention of remaining. Professor Wheezy *may* reconcile this very extraordinary conduct with *his* notions of fair and equitable dealing, but I would recommend Professor Wheezy to be cautious how he presumes too far upon his well-earned reputation. How such a man as Professor Snore, or, which is still more extraordinary, such an individual as Professor Doze, can quietly allow himself to be mixed up with such proceedings as these, you will naturally inquire. Upon this head, rumor is silent; I have my speculations, but forbear to give utterance to them just now.”

“Four o’clock.

“The town is filling fast ; eighteen pence has been offered for a bed and refused. Several gentlemen were under the necessity last night of sleeping in the brick-fields, and on the steps of doors, for which they were taken before the magistrates in a body this morning, and committed to prison as vagrants for various terms. One of these persons I understand to be a highly respectable tinker, of great practical skill, who had forwarded a paper to the president of Section D., Mechanical Science, on the construction of pipkins with copper bottoms and safety-valves, of which report speaks highly. The incarceration of this gentleman is greatly to be regretted, as his absence will preclude any discussion on the subject.

“The bills are being taken down in all directions, and lodgings are being secured on almost any terms. I have heard of fifteen shillings a week for two rooms, exclusive of coals and attendance, but I can scarcely believe it. The excitement is dreadful. I was informed this morning that the civil authorities, apprehensive of some outbreak of popular feeling, had commanded a recruiting sergeant and two corporals to be under arms ; and that, with the view of not irritating the people unnecessarily by their presence, they had been requested to take up their position before daybreak in a turnpike, distant about a quarter of a mile from the town. The vigor and promptness of these measures cannot be too highly extolled.

“Intelligence has just been brought me, that an elderly female, in a state of inebriety, has declared in the open street her intention to ‘do’ for Mr. Slug. Some statistical returns compiled by that gentleman, relative to the consumption of raw spirituous liquors in this place, are supposed to be the cause of the wretch’s animosity. It is added, that this declaration was loudly cheered by a crowd of persons who had assembled on the spot ; and that one man had the boldness to designate Mr. Slug aloud by the opprobrious epithet of ‘Stick-in-the-mud !’ It is earnestly to be hoped that now, when the moment has arrived for their interference, the magistrates will not shrink from the exercise of that power which is vested in them by the constitution of our common country.”

“Half past ten.

“The disturbance, I am happy to inform you, has been completely quelled, and the ringleader taken into custody. She had a pail of cold water thrown over her, previous to being locked up, and expresses great contrition and uneasiness. We are all in a fever of anticipation about to-morrow; but, now that we are within a few hours of the meeting of the association, and at last enjoy the proud consciousness of having its illustrious members amongst us, I trust and hope everything may go off peaceably. I shall send you a full report of to-morrow’s proceedings by the night coach.”

“Eleven o’clock.

“I open my letter to say that nothing whatever has occurred since I folded it up.”

“Thursday.

“The sun rose this morning at the usual hour. I did not observe anything particular in the aspect of the glorious planet, except that he appeared to me (it might have been a delusion of my heightened fancy) to shine with more than common brilliancy, and to shed a refulgent lustre upon the town, such as I had never observed before. This is the more extraordinary, as the sky was perfectly cloudless, and the atmosphere peculiarly fine. At half past nine o’clock the general committee assembled, with the last year’s president in the chair. The report of the council was read; and one passage, which stated that the council had corresponded with no less than three thousand five hundred and seventy-one persons, (all of whom paid their own postage,) on no fewer than seven thousand two hundred and forty-three topics, was received with a degree of enthusiasm which no effort could suppress. The various committees and sections having been appointed, and the mere formal business transacted, the great proceedings of the meeting commenced at eleven o’clock precisely. I had the happiness of occupying a most eligible position at that time, in

“SECTION A. — ZOÖLOGY AND BOTANY.

“GREAT ROOM, PIG AND TINDER-BOX.

“PRESIDENT — PROFESSOR SNORE. VICE-PRESIDENTS —

“PROFESSORS DOZE AND WHEEZY.

“The scene at this moment was particularly striking. The sun streamed through the windows of the apartments, and tinted the whole scene with its brilliant rays, bringing out in strong relief the noble visages of the professors and scientific gentlemen, who, some with bald heads, some with red heads, some with brown heads, some with gray heads, some with black heads, some with block heads, presented a *coup-d’œil* which no eye-witness will readily forget. In front of these gentlemen were papers and inkstands; and round the room, on elevated benches extending as far as the forms could reach, were assembled a brilliant concourse of those lovely and elegant women for which Mudfog is justly acknowledged to be without a rival in the whole world. The contrast between their fair faces and the dark coats and trousers of the scientific gentlemen I shall never cease to remember while Memory holds her seat.

“Time having been allowed for a slight confusion, occasioned by the falling down of the greater part of the platforms, to subside, the president called on one of the secretaries to read a communication entitled, ‘Some remarks on the industrious fleas, with considerations on the importance of establishing infant schools among that numerous class of society; of directing their industry to useful and practical ends; and of applying the surplus fruits thereof, towards providing for them a comfortable and respectable maintenance in their old age.’

“The Author stated, that, having long turned his attention to the moral and social condition of these interesting animals, he had been induced to visit our exhibition in Regent Street, London, commonly known by the designation of ‘The Industrious Fleas.’ He had there seen many fleas, occupied certainly in various pursuits and avocations, but occupied, he was bound to add, in a manner which no man of well-regulated mind could fail to regard with sorrow and regret. One flea, reduced to the level of a beast of burden, was drawing about a miniature gig, containing a particularly small effigy of his Grace the Duke of Wellington; while another was staggering beneath the weight of a golden model of his great adversary Napoleon Bonaparte. Some brought up as mountebanks and ballet-dancers, were performing a figure-dance

(he regretted to observe, that, of the fleas so employed, several were females) ; others were in training, in a small card-board box, for pedestrians, — mere sporting characters, — and two were actually engaged in the cold-blooded and barbarous occupation of duelling ; a pursuit from which humanity recoiled with horror and disgust. He suggested that measures should be immediately taken to employ the labor of these fleas as part and parcel of the productive power of the country, which might easily be done by the establishment among them of infant schools and houses of industry, in which a system of virtuous education, based upon sound principles, should be observed, and moral precepts strictly inculcated. He proposed that every flea who presumed to exhibit, for hire, music, or dancing, or any species of theatrical entertainment, without a license, should be considered a vagabond, and treated accordingly ; in which respect he only placed him upon a level with the rest of mankind. He would further suggest that their labor should be placed under the control and regulation of the State, who should set apart from the profits a fund for the support of superannuated or disabled fleas, their widows and orphans. With this view, he proposed that liberal premiums should be offered for the three best designs for a general alms-house ; from which — as insect architecture was well known to be in a very advanced and perfect state — we might possibly derive many valuable hints for the improvement of our metropolitan universities, national galleries, and other public edifices.

“ The President wished to be informed how the ingenious gentleman proposed to open a communication with fleas generally, in the first instance, so that they might be thoroughly imbued with a sense of the advantages they must necessarily derive from changing their mode of life, and apply themselves to honest labor. This appeared to him the only difficulty.

“ The Author submitted that this difficulty was easily overcome, or rather that there was no difficulty at all in the case. Obviously the course to be pursued, if her Majesty’s government could be prevailed upon to take up the plan, would be, to secure at a remunerative salary the individual to whom he had alluded as presiding over

the exhibition in Regent Street at the period of his visit. That gentleman would at once be able to put himself in communication with the mass of the fleas, and to instruct them in pursuance of some general plan of education, to be sanctioned by Parliament, until such time as the more intelligent among them were advanced enough to officiate as teachers to the rest.

“The President and several members of the section highly complimented the author of the paper last read, on his most ingenious and important treatise. It was determined that the subject should be recommended to the immediate consideration of the council.

“Mr. Wigsby produced a cauliflower somewhat larger than a chaise-umbrella, which had been raised by no other artificial means than the simple application of highly carbonated soda-water as manure. He explained that by scooping out the head, which would afford a new and delicious species of nourishment for the poor, a parachute, in principle something similar to that constructed by M. Garnerin, was at once obtained; the stalk of course being kept downwards. He added that he was perfectly willing to make a descent from a height of not less than three miles and a quarter; and had in fact already proposed the same to the proprietors of the Vauxhall Gardens, who in the handsomest manner at once consented to his wishes, and appointed an early day next summer for the undertaking; merely stipulating that the rim of the cauliflower should be previously broken in three or four places to insure the safety of the descent.

“The President congratulated the public on the *grand gala* in store for them, and warmly eulogized the proprietors of the establishment alluded to, for their love of science, and regard for the safety of human life, both of which did them the highest honor.

“A Member wished to know how many thousand additional lamps the royal property would be illuminated with, on the night after the descent.

Mr. Wigsby replied that the point was not yet finally decided; but he believed it was proposed, over and above the ordinary illuminations, to exhibit in various devices eight millions and a half of additional lamps.

“The Member expressed himself much gratified with this announcement.

“Mr. Blunderum delighted the section with a most interesting and valuable paper ‘on the last moments of the learned pig,’ which produced a very strong impression upon the assembly, the account being compiled from the personal recollections of his favorite attendant. The account stated in the most emphatic terms that the animal’s name was not Toby, but Solomon; and distinctly proved that he could have no near relatives in the profession, as many designing persons had falsely stated, inasmuch as his father, mother, brothers and sisters, had all fallen victims to the butcher at different times. An uncle of his, indeed, had with very great labor been traced to a sty in Somers Town; but as he was in a very infirm state at the time, being afflicted with measles, and shortly afterwards disappeared, there appeared too much reason to conjecture that he had been converted into sausages. The disorder of the learned pig was originally a severe cold, which, being aggravated by excessive trough indulgence, finally settled upon the lungs, and terminated in a general decay of the constitution. A melancholy instance of a presentiment entertained by the animal of his approaching dissolution was recorded. After gratifying a numerous and fashionable company with his performances, in which no falling off whatever was visible, he fixed his eyes on the biographer, and, turning to the watch which lay on the floor, and on which he was accustomed to point out the hour, deliberately passed his snout twice round the dial. In precisely four-and-twenty hours from that time he had ceased to exist!

“Professor Wheezy inquired whether, previous to his demise, the animal had expressed, by signs or otherwise, any wishes regarding the disposal of his little property.

“Mr. Blunderum replied, that, when the biographer took up the pack of cards at the conclusion of the performance, the animal grunted several times in a significant manner, and nodded his head as he was accustomed to do, when gratified. From these gestures it was understood that he wished the attendant to keep the cards, which he had ever since done. He had not expressed

any wish relative to his watch, which had accordingly been pawned by the same individual.

"The President wished to know whether any member of the section had ever seen or conversed with the pig-faced lady, who was reported to have worn a black velvet mask, and to have taken her meals from a golden trough.

"After some hesitation a Member replied that the pig-faced lady was his mother-in-law, and that he trusted the president would not violate the sanctity of private life.

"The President begged pardon. He had considered the pig-faced lady a public character. Would the honorable member object to state, with a view to the advancement of science, whether she was in any way connected with the learned pig?

"The Member replied in the same low tone, that, as the question appeared to involve a suspicion that the learned pig might be his half-brother, he must decline answering it.

"SECTION B. — ANATOMY AND MEDICINE.

"COACH-HOUSE, PIG AND TINDER-BOX.

"PRESIDENT — DR. TOORELL. VICE-PRESIDENTS — PROFESSORS
MUFF AND NOGO.

"Dr. Kutankumagen (of Moscow) read to the section a report of a case which had occurred within his own practice, strikingly illustrative of the power of medicine, as exemplified in his successful treatment of a virulent disorder. He had been called in to visit the patient on the 1st of April, 1837. He was then laboring under symptoms peculiarly alarming to any medical man. His frame was stout and muscular, his step firm and elastic, his cheeks plump and red, his voice loud, his appetite good, his pulse full and round. He was in the constant habit of eating three meals *per diem*, and of drinking at least one bottle of wine and one glass of spirituous liquors diluted with water, in the course of the four-and-twenty hours. He laughed constantly, and in so hearty a manner that it was terrible to hear him. By dint of powerful medicine, low diet and bleeding, the symptoms in the course of three days perceptibly decreased. A rigid perseverance in the same course of treatment for only one week, accompanied with small doses of water-gruel, weak

broth, and barley water, led to their entire disappearance. In the course of a month he was sufficiently recovered to be carried down stairs by two nurses, and to enjoy an airing in a close carriage, supported by soft pillows. At the present moment he was restored so far as to walk about, with the slight assistance of a crutch and a boy. It would perhaps be gratifying to the section to learn that he ate little, drank little, slept little, and was never heard to laugh by any accident whatever.

“ Dr. W. R. Fee, in complimenting the honorable member upon the triumphant cure he had effected, begged to ask whether the patient still bled freely ?

“ Dr. Kutankumagen replied in the affirmative.

“ Dr. W. R. Fee. — And you found that he bled freely during the whole course of the disorder ?

“ Dr. Kutankumagen. — O dear, yes ; most freely.

“ Dr. Neeshawts supposed, that if the patient had not submitted to be bled with great readiness and perseverance, so extraordinary a cure could never, in fact, have been accomplished. Dr. Kutankumagen rejoined, certainly not.

“ Mr. Knight Bell (M. R. C. S.) exhibited a wax preparation of the interior of a gentleman who, in early life, had inadvertently swallowed a door-key. It was a curious fact that a medical student of dissipated habits, being present at the *post-mortem* examination, found means to escape unobserved from the room, with that portion of the coats of the stomach upon which an exact model of the instrument was distinctly impressed, with which he hastened to a locksmith of doubtful character, who made a new key from the pattern so shown to him. With this key the medical student entered the house of the deceased gentleman, and committed a burglary to a large amount, for which he was subsequently tried and executed.

“ The President wished to know what became of the original key after the lapse of years. Mr. Knight Bell replied that the gentleman was always much accustomed to punch, and it was supposed the acid had gradually devoured it.

“ Dr. Neeshawts and several of the members were of opinion that the key must have lain very cold and heavy upon the gentleman's stomach.

“ Mr. Knight Bell believed it did at first. It was worthy of remark, perhaps, that for some years the gentleman was troubled with nightmare, under the influence of which, he always imagined himself a wine-cellar door.

“ Professor Muff related a very extraordinary and convincing proof of the wonderful efficacy of the system of infinitesimal doses, which the section were doubtless aware was based upon the theory that the very minutest amount of any given drug, properly dispersed through the human frame, would be productive of precisely the same result as a very large dose administered in the usual manner. Thus, the fortieth part of a grain of calomel was supposed to be equal to a five-grain calomel pill, and so on in proportion throughout the whole range of medicine. He had tried the experiment in a curious manner upon a publican, who had been brought into the hospital with a broken head, and was cured upon the infinitesimal system in the incredibly short space of three months. This man was a hard drinker. He (Professor Muff) had dispersed three drops of rum through a bucket of water, and requested the man to drink the whole. What was the result? Before he had drunk a quart, he was in a state of beastly intoxication; and five other men were made dead-drunk with the remainder.

“ The President wished to know whether an infinitesimal dose of soda-water would have recovered them? Professor Muff replied that the twenty-fifth part of a teaspoonful, properly administered to each patient, would have sobered him immediately. The President remarked that this was a most important discovery, and he hoped the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen would patronize it immediately.

“ A member begged to be informed whether it would be possible to administer, — say, the twentieth part of a grain of bread and cheese to all grown-up paupers, and the fortieth part to children, with the same satisfying effect as their present allowance.

“ Professor Muff was willing to stake his professional reputation on the perfect adequacy of such a quantity of food to the support of human life, — in workhouses; the

addition of the fifteenth part of a grain of pudding twice a week, would render it a high diet.

“Professor Nogo called the attention of the section to a very extraordinary case of animal magnetism. A private watchman, being merely looked at by the operator from the opposite side of a wide street, was at once observed to be in a very drowsy and languid state. He was followed to his box, and being once slightly rubbed on the palms of the hands, fell into a sound sleep, in which he continued without intermission for ten hours.

“SECTION C.—STATISTICS.

“HAY-LOFT, ORIGINAL PIG.

“PRESIDENT — MR. WOODENSCONSE. VICE-PRESIDENTS — MR. LEBRAIN AND MR. TIMBERED.

“Mr. Slug stated to the section the result of some calculations he had made with great difficulty and labor, regarding the state of infant education among the middle classes of London. He found that, within a circle of three miles from the Elephant and Castle, the following were the names and numbers of children’s books principally in circulation:—

“Jack the Giant-killer	7,943
Ditto and Bean-stalk	8,621
Ditto and Eleven Brothers	2,845
Ditto and Jill	1,998
Total	21,407

“He found that the proportion of Robinson Crusoes to Philip Quarles was as four and a half to one; and that the preponderance of Valentine and Orsons over Goody Two Shoeses was as three and an eighth of the former to half a one of the latter; a comparison of Seven Champions with Simple Simons gave the same result. The ignorance that prevailed was lamentable. One child, on being asked whether he would rather be Saint George of England or a respectable tallow-chandler, instantly replied, ‘Taint George of Ingling.’ Another, a little boy of eight years old, was found to be firmly impressed with a belief in the existence of dragons, and openly stated that it was his intention when he grew up, to rush forth, sword in hand, for the deliverance of captive princesses, and the promis-

cuous slaughter of giants. Not one child among the number interrogated had ever heard of Mungo Park, — some inquiring whether he was at all connected with the black man that swept the crossing; and others whether he was in any way related to the Regent's Park. They had not the slightest conception of the commonest principles of mathematics, and considered Sindbad the Sailor the most enterprising voyager that the world had ever produced.

"A member, strongly deprecating the use of all the other books mentioned, suggested that Jack and Jill might perhaps be exempted from the general censure, inasmuch as the hero and heroine, in the very outset of the tale, were depicted as going *up* a hill to fetch a pail of water, which was a laborious and useful occupation, — supposing the family linen was being washed, for instance.

"Mr. Slug feared that the moral effect of this passage was more than counterbalanced by another in a subsequent part of the poem, in which very gross allusion was made to the mode in which the heroine was personally chastised by her mother

" ' For laughing at Jack's disaster ' ;

besides, the whole work had this one great fault, *it was not true.*

"The President complimented the honorable member on the excellent distinction he had drawn. Several other members, too, dwelt upon the immense and urgent necessity of storing the minds of children with nothing but facts and figures, which process, the President very forcibly remarked, had made them (the section) the men they were.

"Mr. Slug then stated some curious calculations respecting the dogs'-meat barrows of London. He found that the total number of small carts and barrows engaged in dispensing provisions to the cats and dogs of the metropolis, was one thousand seven hundred and forty-three. The average number of skewers delivered daily with the provender, by each dogs'-meat cart or barrow was thirty-six. Now, multiplying the number of skewers so delivered, by the number of barrows, a total

of sixty-two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight skewers daily would be obtained. Allowing that, of these sixty-two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight skewers, the odd two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight were accidentally devoured with the meat, by the most voracious of the animals supplied, it followed that sixty thousand skewers per day, or the enormous number of twenty-one millions nine hundred thousand skewers annually, were wasted in the kennels and dust-holes of London; which, if collected and warehoused, would, in ten years' time, afford a mass of timber more than sufficient for the construction of a first-rate vessel of war for the use of her Majesty's navy, to be called 'The Royal Skewer,' and to become, under that name, the terror of all the enemies of this Island.

"Mr. X. Ledbrain read a very ingenious communication, from which it appeared that the total number of legs belonging to the manufacturing population of one great town in Yorkshire was, in round numbers, forty thousand, while the total number of chair and stool legs in their houses was only thirty thousand, which, upon the very favorable average of three legs to a seat, yielded only ten thousand seats in all. From this calculation it would appear, — not taking wooden or cork legs into the account, but allowing two legs to every person, — that ten thousand individuals (one half of the whole population) were either destitute of any rest for their legs at all, or passed the whole of their leisure time in sitting upon boxes.

"SECTION D. — MECHANICAL SCIENCE.

"COACH-HOUSE, ORIGINAL FIG.

"PRESIDENT — MR. CARTER. VICE-PRESIDENTS — MR. TRUCK AND MR. WAGHORN.

"Professor Queerspeck exhibited an elegant model of a portable railway, neatly mounted in a green case, for the waistcoat pocket. By attaching this beautiful instrument to his boots, any bank or public-office clerk could transport himself from his place of residence to his place of business, at the easy rate of sixty-five miles an hour, which, to gentlemen of sedentary pursuits, would be an incalculable advantage.

"The President was desirous of knowing whether it

was necessary to have a level surface on which the gentleman was to run.

“ Professor Queerspeck explained that City gentlemen would run in trains, being handcuffed together to prevent confusion or unpleasantness. For instance, trains would start every morning at eight, nine, and ten o’clock, from Camden Town, Islington, Camberwell, Hackney, and various other places in which City gentlemen are accustomed to reside. It would be necessary to have a level, but he had provided for this difficulty by proposing that the best line that the circumstances would admit of, should be taken through the sewers which undermine the streets of the metropolis, and which, well lighted by jets from the gas-pipes which run immediately above them, would form a pleasant and commodious arcade, especially in winter time, when the inconvenient custom of carrying umbrellas, now general, could be wholly dispensed with. In reply to another question, Professor Queerspeck stated that no substitute for the purposes to which these arcades were at present devoted had yet occurred to him, but that he hoped no fanciful objection on this head would be allowed to interfere with so great an undertaking.

“ Mr. Jobba produced a forcing-machine on a novel plan, for bringing joint-stock railway shares prematurely to a premium. The instrument was in the form of an elegant gilt weather glass of most dazzling appearance, and was worked behind, by strings, after the manner of a pantomime trick, the strings being always pulled by the directors of the company to which the machine belonged. The quicksilver was so ingeniously placed, that when the acting directors held shares in their pockets, figures denoting very small expenses and very large returns appeared upon the glass; but the moment the directors parted with these pieces of paper, the estimate of needful expenditure suddenly increased itself to an immense extent, while the statements of certain profits became reduced in the same proportion. Mr. Jobba stated that the machine had been in constant requisition for some months past, and he had never once known it to fail.

“ A member expressed his opinion that it was extremely neat and pretty. He wished to know whether

it was not liable to accidental derangement? Mr. Jobba said that the whole machine was undoubtedly liable to be blown up, but that was the only objection to it.

“ Professor Nogo arrived from the anatomical section to exhibit a model of a safety fire-escape, which could be fixed at any time, in less than half an hour, and by means of which, the youngest or most infirm persons (successfully resisting the progress of the flames until it was quite ready) could be preserved if they merely balanced themselves for a few minutes on the sill of their bedroom window, and got into the escape without falling into the street. The Professor stated that the number of boys who had been rescued in the daytime by this machine from houses which were not on fire, was almost incredible. Not a conflagration had occurred in the whole of London for many months past to which the escape had not been carried on the very next day, and put in action before a concourse of persons.

“ The President inquired whether there was not some difficulty in ascertaining which was the top of the machine, and which the bottom, in cases of pressing emergency?

“ Professor Nogo explained that of course it could not be expected to act quite as well when there was a fire, as when there was not a fire; but in the former case he thought it would be of equal service whether the top were up or down.”

With the last section, our correspondent concludes his most able and faithful report, which will never cease to reflect credit upon him for his scientific attainments, and upon us for our enterprising spirit. It is needless to take a review of the subjects which have been discussed; of the mode in which they have been examined; of the great truths which they have elicited. They are now before the world, and we leave them to read, to consider, and to profit.

The place of meeting for next year has undergone discussion, and has at length been decided; regard being had to, and evidence being taken upon, the goodness of its wines, the supply of its markets, the hospitality of its

inhabitants, and the quality of its hotels. We hope at this next meeting our correspondent may again be present, and that we may be once more the means of placing his communications before the world. Until that period we have been prevailed upon to allow this number of our Miscellany to be retailed to the public, or wholesaled to the trade, without any advance upon our usual price.

We have only to add, that the committees are now broken up, and that Mudfog is once again restored to its accustomed tranquillity; that Professors and Members have had balls, and *soirées*, and suppers, and great mutual complimentations, and have at length dispersed to their several homes, — whither all good wishes and joys attend them, until next year!

FULL REPORT

OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE MUDFOG ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EVERYTHING.

IN October last, we did ourselves the immortal credit of recording, at an enormous expense, and by dint of exertions unparalleled in the history of periodical publications, the proceedings of the Mudfog Association for the advancement of Everything, which, in that month, held its first great half-yearly meeting, to the wonder and delight of the whole empire. We announced at the conclusion of that extraordinary and most remarkable Report, that when the Second Meeting of the Society should take place we should be found again at our post renewing our gigantic and spirited endeavors, and once more making the world ring with the accuracy, authenticity, immeasurable superiority, and intense remarkability of our account of its proceedings. In redemption of this pledge, we caused to be despatched per steam to Oldcastle, at which place this second meeting of the society was held on the 20th instant, the same superhumanly endowed gentleman who furnished the former report, and who—gifted by nature with transcendent abilities, and furnished by us with a body of assistants scarcely inferior to himself—has forwarded a series of letters, which for faithfulness of description, power of language, fervor of thought, happiness of expression, and importance of subject-matter, have no equal in the epistolary literature of any age or country. We give this gentleman's correspondence entire, and in the order in which it reached our office.

“SALOON OF STEAMER, Thursday night, half past eight.

“When I left New Burlington Street this evening in the hackney cabriolet, number four thousand two hundred

and eighty-five, I experienced sensations as novel as they were oppressive. A sense of importance of the task I had undertaken, a consciousness that I was leaving London, and stranger still, going somewhere else, a feeling of loneliness and a sensation of jolting, quite bewildered my thoughts and for a time rendered me even insensible to the presence of my carpet-bag and hat-box. I shall ever feel grateful to the driver of a Blackwall omnibus, who, by thrusting the pole of his vehicle through the small door of the cabriolet, awakened me from a tumult of imaginings that are wholly indescribable. But of such materials is our imperfect nature composed!

"I am happy to say that I am the first passenger on board, and shall thus be enabled to give you an account of all that happens in the order of its occurrence. The chimney is smoking a good deal and so are the crew; and the captain, I am informed, is very drunk in a little house upon the deck, something like a black turnpike. I should infer from all I hear that he has got the steam up.

"You will readily guess with what feelings I have just made the discovery that my berth is in the same closet with those engaged by Professor Woodensconce, Mr. Slug, and Professor Grime. Professor Woodensconce has taken the shelf above me, and Mr. Slug and Professor Grime the two shelves opposite. Their luggage has already arrived. On Mr. Slug's bed is a long tin tube of about three inches in diameter, carefully closed at both ends. What can this contain? Some powerful instrument of a new construction doubtless."

"Ten minutes past nine.

"Nobody has yet arrived, nor has anything fresh come in my way, except several joints of beef and mutton, from which I conclude that a good plain dinner has been provided for to-morrow. There is a singular smell below, which gave me some uneasiness at first; but as the steward says it is always there, and never goes away, I am quite comfortable again. I learn from this man that the different sections will be distributed at the Black Boy and Stomach-Ache, and the Boot-Jack and Countenance. If this intelligence be true, and I have no reason to doubt

it, your readers will draw such conclusions as their different opinions may suggest.

"I write down these remarks as they occur to me, or as the facts come to my knowledge, in order that my first impressions may lose nothing of their original vividness. I shall despatch them in small packets as opportunities arise."

"Half past nine.

"Some dark object has just appeared upon the wharf. I think it is a travelling carriage."

"A quarter to ten.

"No, it is n't."

"Half past ten.

"The passengers are pouring in every instant. Four omnibuses full have just arrived upon the wharf, and all is bustle and activity. The noise and confusion are very great. Cloths are laid in the cabins, and the steward is placing blue plates full of knobs of cheese at equal distances down the centre of the tables. He drops a great many knobs; but, being used to it, picks them up again with great dexterity, and after wiping them on his sleeve, throws them back into the plates. He is a young man of exceedingly prepossessing appearance, — either dirty or a mulatto, but I think the former.

"An interesting old gentleman who came to the wharf in an omnibus has just quarrelled violently with the porters, and is staggering towards the vessel with a large trunk in his arms. I trust and hope that he may reach it in safety; but the board he has to cross is narrow and slippery. Was that a splash? Gracious powers!

"I have just returned from the deck. The trunk is standing upon the extreme brink of the wharf, but the old gentleman is nowhere to be seen. The watchman is not sure whether he went down or not, but promises to drag for him the first thing to-morrow morning. May his humane efforts prove successful!

"Professor Nogo has this moment arrived with his nightcap on under his hat. He has ordered a glass of cold brandy and water, with a hard biscuit and a basin, and has gone straight to bed. What can this mean?

"The three other scientific gentlemen to whom I have already alluded have come on board, and have all tried

their beds, with the exception of Professor Woodensconce, who sleeps in one of the top ones, and can't get into it. Mr. Slug, who sleeps in the other top one, is unable to get out of his, and is to have his supper handed up by a boy. I have had the honor to introduce myself to these gentlemen, and we have amicably arranged the order in which we shall retire to rest; which it is necessary to agree upon, because, although the cabin is very comfortable, there is not room for more than one gentleman to be out of bed at a time, and even he must take his boots off in the passage.

"As I anticipated, the knobs of cheese were provided for the passengers' supper, and are now in course of consumption. Your readers will be surprised to hear that Professor Woodensconce has abstained from cheese for eight years, although he takes butter in considerable quantities. Professor Grime, having lost several teeth, is unable, I observe, to eat his crusts without previously soaking them in his bottled porter. How interesting are these peculiarities!"

"Half past eleven.

"Professors Woodensconce and Grime, with a degree of good humor that delights us all, have just arranged to toss for a bottle of mulled port. There has been some discussion whether the payment should be decided by the first toss or the best out of three. Eventually the latter course has been determined on. Deeply do I wish that both gentlemen could win; but that being impossible, I own that my personal aspirations, I speak as an individual, and do not compromise either you or your readers by this expression of feeling, are with Professor Woodensconce. I have backed that gentleman to the amount of eighteen pence."

"Twenty minutes to twelve.

"Professor Grime has inadvertently tossed his half-crown out of one of the cabin-windows, and it has been arranged the steward shall toss for him. Bets are offered on any side to any amount, but there are no takers.

"Professor Woodensconce has just called 'woman'; but the coin having lodged in a beam is a long time coming down again. The interest and suspense of this one moment are beyond anything that can be imagined."

“Twelve o’clock.

“The mulled port is smoking on the table before me, and Professor Grime has won. Tossing is a game of chance; but on every ground, whether of public or private character, intellectual endowments, or scientific attainments, I cannot help expressing my opinion that Professor Woodensconce *ought* to have come off victorious. There is an exultation about Professor Grime incompatible I fear with greatness.”

“A quarter past twelve.

“Professor Grime continues to exult, and to boast of his victory in no very measured terms, observing that he always does win, and that he knew it would be a ‘head’ beforehand, with many other remarks of a similar nature. Surely this gentleman is not so lost to every feeling of decency and propriety as not to feel and know the superiority of Professor Woodensconce. Is Professor Grime insane? or does he wish to be reminded in plain language of his true position in society, and the precise level of his acquirements and abilities? Professor Grime will do well to look to this.”

“One o’clock.

“I am writing in bed. The small cabin is illuminated by the feeble light of a flickering lamp suspended from the ceiling; Professor Grime is lying on the opposite shelf on the broad of his back, with his mouth wide open. The scene is indescribably solemn. The ripple of the tide, the noise of the sailors’ feet overhead, the gruff voices on the river, the dogs on the shore, the snoring of the passengers, and a constant creaking of every plank in the vessel, are the only sounds that meet the ear. With these exceptions, all is profound silence.

“My curiosity has been within the last moment very much excited. Mr. Slug, who lies above Professor Grime, has cautiously withdrawn the curtains of his berth, and after looking anxiously out, as if to satisfy himself that his companions are asleep, has taken up the tin tube of which I have before spoken, and is regarding it with great interest. What rare mechanical combinations can be obtained in that mysterious case? It is evidently a profound secret to all.”

“A quarter past one.

“The behavior of Mr. Slug grows more and more mysterious. He has unscrewed the top of the tube, and now renews his observation upon his companions; evidently to make sure that he is wholly unobserved. He is clearly on the eve of some great experiment. Pray Heaven that it be not a dangerous one; but the interests of science must be promoted, and I am prepared for the worst.”

“Five minutes later.

“He has produced a large pair of scissors, and drawn a roll of some substance, not unlike parchment in appearance, from the tin case. The experiment is about to begin. I must strain my eyes to the utmost, in the attempt to follow its minutest operation.”

“Twenty minutes before two.

“I have at length been enabled to ascertain that the tin tube contains a few yards of some celebrated plaster recommended, — as I discover on regarding the label attentively through my eye-glass, — as a preservative against sea-sickness. Mr. Slug has cut it up into small portions, and is now sticking it over himself in every direction.”

“Three o'clock.

“Precisely a quarter of an hour ago we weighed anchor, and the machinery was suddenly put in motion with a noise so appalling, that Professor Woodensconce, who had ascended to his berth by means of a platform of carpet-bags arranged by himself on geometrical principles, darted from his shelf head foremost, and gaining his feet with all the rapidity of extreme terror, ran wildly into the ladies' cabin, under the impression that we were sinking, and uttering loud cries for aid. I am assured that the scene which ensued baffles all description. There were one hundred and forty-seven ladies in their respective berths at the time.

“Mr. Slug has remarked, as an additional instance of the extreme ingenuity of the steam-engine as applied to purposes of navigation, that in whatever part of the vessel a passenger's berth may be situated, the machinery always appears to be exactly under his pillow. He in-

tends stating this very beautiful, though simple discovery to the association."

"Half past three.

"We are still in smooth water; that is to say, in as smooth water as a steam-vessel ever can be, for as Professor Woodensconce, who has just woke up, learnedly remarks, another great point of ingenuity about a steamer is, that it always carries a little storm with it. You can scarcely conceive how exciting the jerking pulsation of the ship becomes. It is a matter of positive difficulty to get to sleep."

"Friday afternoon, six o'clock.

"I regret to inform you that Mr. Slug's plaster has proved of no avail. He is in great agony, but has applied several large additional pieces notwithstanding. How affecting is this extreme devotion to science and pursuit of knowledge under the most trying circumstances!

"We were extremely happy this morning, and the breakfast was one of the most animated description. Nothing unpleasant occurred until noon, with the exception of Dr. Foxey's brown silk umbrella and white hat becoming entangled in the machinery while he was explaining to a knot of ladies the construction of the steam-engine. I fear the gravy-soup for lunch was injudicious. We lost a great many passengers almost immediately afterwards."

"Half past six.

"I am again in bed. Anything so heart-rending as Mr. Slug's sufferings it has never yet been my lot to witness."

"Seven o'clock.

"A messenger has just come down for a clean pocket-handkerchief from Professor Woodensconce's bag, that unfortunate gentleman being quite unable to leave the deck, and imploring constantly to be thrown overboard. From this man I understand that Professor Nogo, though in a state of utter exhaustion, clings feebly to the hard biscuit and cold brandy-and-water, under the impression that they will yet restore him. Such is the triumph of mind over matter.

"Professor Grime is in bed, to all appearance quite well; but he *will* eat, and it is disagreeable to see him.

Has this gentleman no sympathy with the sufferings of his fellow-creatures? If he has, on what principle can he call for mutton-chops, — and smile?"

"BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE, OLDCASTLE, Saturday noon.

"You will be happy to learn that I have at length arrived here in safety. The town is excessively crowded, and all the private lodgings and hotels are filled with *savans* of both sexes. The tremendous assemblages of intellect that one encounters in every street is in the last degree overwhelming.

"Notwithstanding the throng of people here, I have been fortunate enough to meet with very comfortable accommodation on very reasonable terms, having secured a sofa in the first-floor passage at one guinea per night, which includes permission to take my meals in the bar, on condition that I walk about the streets at all other times to make room for other gentlemen similarly situated. I have been over the outhouses intended to be devoted to the reception of the various sections, both here and at the Boot-Jack and Countenance, and am much delighted with the arrangements. Nothing can exceed the fresh appearance of the sawdust with which the floors are sprinkled. The forms are of unplanned deal, and the general effect, as you can well imagine is extremely beautiful."

"Half past nine.

"The number and rapidity of the arrivals are quite bewildering. Within the last ten minutes a stage-coach has driven up to the door, filled inside and out with distinguished characters, comprising Mr. Muddlebrains, Mr. Drawley, Professor Muff, Mr. X. Misty, Mr. X. X. Misty, Mr. Purbblind, Professor Rummun, The Honorable and Reverend Mr. Long Ears, Professor John Ketch, Sir William Joltered, Doctor Buffer, Mr. Smith of London, Mr. Brown of Edenburg, Sir Hookham Snivey, and Professor Pumpkinskull. The last ten-named gentlemen were wet through, and looked extremely intelligent."

"Sunday, two o'clock, P. M.

"The Honorable and Reverend Mr. Long Ears, accompanied by Sir William Joltered, walked and drove this

morning. They accomplished the former feat in boots, and the latter in a hired fly. This has naturally given rise to much discussion.

"I have just learned that an interview has taken place at the Boot-Jack and Countenance, between Sowster, the active and intelligent beadle of this place, and Professor Pumpkinskull, who, as your readers are doubtless aware, is an influential member of the council. I forbear to communicate any of the rumors to which this very extraordinary proceeding has given rise until I have seen Sowster, and endeavor to ascertain the truth from him."

"Half past six.

"I engaged a donkey-chaise shortly after writing the above, and proceeded at a brisk trot in the direction of Sowster's residence, passing through a beautiful expanse of country with red brick buildings on either side, and stopping in the market-place to observe the spot where Mr. Kwakley's hat was blown off yesterday. It is an uneven piece of paving, but has certainly no appearance which would lead one to suppose that any such event had recently occurred there. From this point I proceeded, — passing the gas-works and tallow-melter's, — to a lane which had been pointed out to me as the beadle's place of residence; and before I had driven a dozen yards farther, I had the good fortune to meet Sowster himself advancing towards me.

"Sowster is a fat man, with a more enlarged development of that peculiar conformation of countenance which is vulgarly termed a double chin that I remember to have ever seen before. He has also a very red nose, which he attributes to a habit of early rising, — so red, indeed, that, but for this explanation, I should have supposed it to proceed from occasional inebriety. He informed me that he did not feel himself at liberty to relate what had passed between himself and Professor Pumpkinskull, but had no objection to state that it was connected with a matter of police regulation, and added with peculiar significance, 'Never was sitch times!'

"You will easily believe that this intelligence gave me considerable surprise, not wholly unmixed with anxiety, and that I lost no time in waiting on Professor Pumpkin-

skull, and stating the object of my visit. After a few moments' reflection, the Professor, who, I am bound to say, behaved with the utmost politeness, openly avowed, — I marked the passage in italics, — *that he had requested Sowster to attend on the Monday morning at the Boot-Jack and Countenance to keep off the boys ; and that he had further desired that the under-beadle might be stationed, with the same object, at the Black Boy and Stomach-Ache !*

“ Now I leave this unconstitutional proceeding to your comments and the consideration of your readers. I have yet to learn that a beadle, without the precincts of a church, churchyard, or workhouse, and acting otherwise than under the express orders of churchwardens and overseers in council assembled, to enforce the law against people who come upon the parish, and other offenders, has any lawful authority whatever over the rising youth of this country. I have yet to learn that a beadle can be called out by any civilian to exercise a domination and despotism over the boys of Britain. I have yet to learn that a beadle will be permitted by the commissioners of poor-law regulation, to wear out the soles and heels of his boots in illegal interference with the liberties of people not proved poor or otherwise criminal. I have yet to learn that a beadle has power to stop up the Queen's highway at his will and pleasure, or that the whole width of the street is not free and open to any man, boy, or woman in existence, up to the very walls of the houses, — ay, be they Black Boys and Stomach-Aches, or Boot-jacks and Countenances, I care not.”

“ Nine o'clock.

“ I have procured a local artist to make a faithful sketch of the tyrant Sowster, which, as he has acquired this infamous celebrity, you will no doubt wish to have engraved for the purpose of presenting a copy with every copy of your next number. The under-beadle has consented to write his life, but it is to be strictly anonymous.

“ The likeness is of course from the life, and complete in every respect. Even if I had been totally ignorant of the man's real character, and it had been placed before me without remark, I should have shuddered involuntarily. There is an intense malignity of expression in the features, and a baleful ferocity of purpose in the ruf-

fian's eye, which appalls and sickens. His whole air is rampant with cruelty, nor is the stomach less characteristic of his demoniac propensities."

"Monday.

"The great day has at length arrived. I have neither eyes, nor ears, nor pens, nor ink, nor paper, for anything but the wonderful proceedings that have astounded my senses. Let me collect my energies and proceed to the account.

"SECTION A. — ZOÖLOGY AND BOTANY.

"FRONT PARLOR, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.

"PRESIDENT — SIR WILLIAM JOLTERED. VICE-PRESIDENTS — MR.

"MUDDLEBRAINS AND MR. DRAWLEY.

"Mr. X. X. Misty communicated some remarks on the disappearance of dancing-bears from the streets of London, with observations on the exhibition of monkeys as connected with barrel-organs. The writer had observed with feelings of the utmost pain and regret, that some years ago a sudden and unaccountable change in the public taste took place with reference to itinerant bears, who, being discountenanced by the populace, gradually fell off one by one from the streets of the metropolis, until not one remained to create a taste for natural history in the breasts of the poor and uninstructed. One bear, indeed, — a brown and ragged animal, — had lingered about the haunts of his former triumphs, with a worn and dejected visage and feeble limbs, and had essayed to wield his quarter-staff for the amusement of the multitude; but hunger and an utter want of any due recompense for his abilities, had at length driven him from the field, and it was only too probable that he had fallen a sacrifice to the rising taste for grease. He regretted to add that a similar and no less lamentable change had taken place with reference to monkeys. Those delightful animals had formerly been almost as plentiful as the organs on the tops of which they were accustomed to sit; the proportion in the year 1829 it appeared by the parliamentary return, being as one monkey to three organs. Owing however to an altered taste in musical instruments and the substitution, in a great measure, of narrow boxes of music for organs, which left the monkeys nothing to sit upon, this source of public amusement was wholly dried

up. Considering it a matter of the deepest importance in connection with national education, that the people should not lose such opportunities of making themselves acquainted with the manners and customs of two most interesting species of animals, the author submitted that some measures should be immediately taken for the restoration of those pleasing and truly intellectual amusements.

“The President inquired by what means the honorable member proposed to attain this most desirable end?

“The Author submitted that it could be most fully and satisfactorily accomplished, if Her Majesty’s government would cause to be brought over to England, and maintained at the public expense, and for the public amusement, such a number of bears as would enable every quarter of the town to be visited, — say, at least, by three bears a week. No difficulty whatever need be experienced in providing a fitting place for the reception of those animals, as a commodious bear-garden could be erected in the immediate neighborhood of both houses of Parliament; obviously the most proper and eligible spot for such an establishment.

“Professor Mull doubted very much whether any correct ideas of natural history were propagated by the means to which the honorable member had so ably adverted. On the contrary, he believed that they had been the means of diffusing very incorrect and imperfect notions on the subject. He spoke from personal observation and personal experience, when he said that many children of great abilities had been induced to believe, from what they had observed in the streets, at and before the period to which the honorable gentleman had referred, that all monkeys were born in red coats and spangles and that their hats and features also came by nature. He wished to know distinctly whether the honorable gentleman attributed the want of encouragement the bears had met with to the decline of public taste in that respect, or to a want of ability on the part of the bears themselves?

“Mr. X. X. Misty replied, that he could not bring himself to believe but that there must be a great deal of floating talent among the bears and monkeys generally,

which in the absence of any proper encouragement, was dispersed in other directions.

“Professor Pumpkinskull wished to take that opportunity of calling the attention of the section to a most important and serious point. The author of the treatise just read had alluded to the prevalent taste for bears’ grease as a means of promoting the growth of hair, which, undoubtedly, was diffused to a very great and, as it appeared to him, very alarming extent. No gentleman attending that section could fail to be aware of the fact that the youth of the present age evinced, by their behavior in the streets, and all places of public resort, a considerable lack of that gallantry and gentlemanly feeling which, in more ignorant times, had been thought becoming. He wished to know whether it were possible that a constant outward application of bears’ grease by the young gentlemen about town, had imperceptibly infused into those unhappy persons something of the nature and quality of the bear? He shuddered as he threw out the remark; but if this theory, on inquiry, should prove to be well founded, it would at once explain a great deal of unpleasant eccentricity of behavior, which, without some such discovery, was wholly unaccountable.

“The President highly complimented the learned gentleman on his most valuable suggestion, which produced the greatest effect upon the assembly; and remarked that only a week previous he had seen some young gentlemen at a theatre eying a box of ladies with a fierce intensity which nothing but the influence of some brutish appetite could possibly explain. It was dreadful to reflect that our youth were so rapidly verging into a generation of bears.

“After a scene of scientific enthusiasm it was resolved that this important question should be immediately submitted to the consideration of the council.

“The President wished to know whether any gentleman could inform the section what had become of the dancing-dogs?

“A member replied, after some hesitation, that on the day after three glee-singers had been committed to prison as criminals by a late most zealous police magistrate of the metropolis, the dogs had abandoned their professional

duties, and dispersed themselves in different quarters of the town to gain a livelihood by less dangerous means. He was given to understand that since that period they had supported themselves by lying in wait for and robbing blind men's poodles.

"Mr. Flummery exhibited a twig, claiming to be a veritable branch of that noble tree known to naturalists as the Shakespeare, which has taken root in every land and climate, and gathered under the shade of its broad green boughs the great family of mankind. The learned gentleman remarked, that the twig had been undoubtedly called by other names in its time ; but that it had been pointed out to him by an old lady in Warwickshire, where the great tree had grown, as a shoot of the genuine Shakespeare, by which name he begged to introduce it to his countrymen.

"The President wished to know what botanical definition the honorable gentleman could afford of the curiosity ?

"Mr. Flummery expressed his opinion that it was a
DECIDED PLANT.

"SECTION B. — DISPLAY OF MODELS AND MECHANICAL SCIENCE.

"LARGE ROOM, BOOT-JACK AND COUNTENANCE.

"PRESIDENT — MR. MALLET. VICE PRESIDENTS — MESSRS. LEAVER AND SCROO.

"Mr. Crinkles exhibited a most beautiful and delicate machine, of a little larger size than an ordinary snuff-box, manufactured entirely by himself, and composed exclusively of steel ; by the aid of which more pockets were picked in one hour than by the present slow and tedious process in four-and-twenty. The inventor remarked that it had been put into active operation in Fleet Street, the Strand, and other thoroughfares, and had never been once known to fail.

"After some slight delay, occasioned by the various members of the section buttoning their pockets.

"The President narrowly inspected the invention, and declared that he had never seen a machine of more beautiful or exquisite construction. Would the inventor be good enough to inform the section whether he had taken any and what means for bringing it into general operation ?

“ Mr. Crinkles stated, that, after encountering some preliminary difficulties, he had succeeded in putting himself in communication with Mr. Fogle Hunter, and other gentlemen connected with the swell mob, who had awarded the invention the very highest and most unqualified approbation. He regretted to say, however, that those distinguished practitioners, in common with a gentleman of the name of Ginlet-eyed Tommy, and other members of a secondary grade of the profession whom he was understood to represent, entertained an insuperable objection to its being brought into general use, on the ground that it would have the inevitable effect of almost entirely superseding manual labor, and throwing a great number of highly deserving persons out of employment.

“ The President hoped that no such fanciful objections would be allowed to stand in the way of such a great public improvement.

“ Mr. Crinkles hoped so too ; but he feared that if the gentlemen of the swell mob persevered in their objection, nothing could be done.

“ Professor Grime suggested that surely, in that case, Her Majesty’s government might be prevailed upon to take it up.

“ Mr. Crinkles said, that if the objection were found to be insuperable, he should apply to Parliament, who he thought could not fail to recognize the utility of the invention.

“ The President observed that up to his time Parliament had certainly got on very well without it ; but as they did their business on a very large scale, he had no doubt they would gladly adopt the improvement. His only fear was that the machine might be worn out by constant working.

“ Mr. Coppernose called the attention of the section to a proposition of great magnitude and interest, illustrated by a vast number of models, and stated with much clearness and perspicuity in a treatise entitled ‘ Practical Suggestions on the necessity of providing some harmless and wholesome relaxation for the young noblemen of England.’ His proposition was that a space of ground of not less than ten miles in length and four in breadth should be purchased by a new company, to be incorpo-

rated by act of Parliament, and enclosed by a brick wall of not less than twelve feet in height. He proposed that it should be laid out with highway-roads, turnpikes, bridges, miniature villages, and every object that could conduce to the comfort and glory of Four-in-hand Clubs, so that they might be fairly presumed to require no drive beyond it. This delightful retreat would be fitted up with most commodious and extensive stables for the convenience of such of the nobility and gentry as had a taste for ostlering, and with houses of entertainment furnished in the most expensive and handsome style. It would be further provided with whole streets of door-knockers and bell-handles of extra size, so constructed that they could be easily wrenched off at night, and regularly screwed on again by attendants provided for the purpose, every day. There would also be gas-lamps of real glass, which could be broken at a comparatively small expense per dozen, and a broad and handsome foot-pavement for gentlemen to drive their cabriolets upon when they were humorously disposed, — for the full enjoyment of which feat live pedestrians would be procured from the workhouse at a very small charge per head. The place being enclosed and carefully screened from the intrusion of the public, there would be no objections to gentlemen laying aside any article of their costume that was considered to interfere with a pleasant frolic, or indeed to their walking about without any costume at all, if they liked that better. In short, every facility of enjoyment would be afforded that the most gentlemanly person could possibly desire. But as even these advantages would be incomplete, unless there were some means provided of enabling the nobility and gentry to display their prowess when they sallied forth after dinner, and as some inconvenience might be experienced in the event of their being reduced to the necessity of pummeling each other, the inventor had turned his attention to the construction of an entirely new police force, composed exclusively of automaton figures, which, with the assistance of the ingenious Signor Gagliardi, of Windmill Street in the Haymarket, he had succeeded in making with such nicety, that a policeman, cab-driver, or old woman, made upon the principle of the models exhibited,

would walk about until knocked down like any real man ; nay more, if set upon and beaten by six or eight noblemen or gentlemen, after it was down, the figure would utter divers groans mingled with entreaties for mercy ; thus rendering the illusion complete, and the enjoyment perfect. But the invention did not stop even here, for station-houses would be built, containing good beds for noblemen and gentlemen during the night, and in the morning they would repair to a commodious police-office where a pantomimic investigation would take place before automaton magistrates, — quite equal to life, — who would fine them so many counters, with which they would be previously provided for the purpose. This office would be furnished with an inclined plane for the convenience of any nobleman or gentleman who might wish to bring in his horse as a witness, and the prisoners would be at perfect liberty, as they were now, to interrupt the complainants as much as they pleased, and to make any remarks that they thought proper. The charge for those amusements would amount to very little more than they already cost, and the inventor submitted that the public would be much benefited and comforted by the proposed arrangement.

“ Professor Nogo wished to be informed what amount of automaton police force it was proposed to raise in the first instance.

“ Mr. Coppernose replied that it was proposed to begin with seven divisions of police of a score each, lettered from A to G inclusive. It was proposed that not more than half the number should be placed on active duty, and that the remainder should be kept on shelves in the police-office, ready to be called out at a moment’s notice.

“ The President, awarding the utmost merit to the ingenious gentleman who had originated the idea, doubted whether the automaton police would quite answer the purpose. He feared that noblemen and gentlemen would perhaps require the excitement of threshing living subjects.

“ Mr. Coppernose submitted that as the usual odds in such cases were ten noblemen or gentlemen to one policeman or cab-driver, it could make very little difference in

point of excitement whether the policeman or cab-driver were a man or a block. The great advantage would be, that a policeman's limb might be knocked off, and yet he would be in a condition to do duty next day. He might even give his evidence next morning with his head in his hand, and give it equally well.

"Professor Muff. — Will you allow me to ask you, sir, of what materials it is intended that the magistrates' heads shall be composed ?

"Mr. Coppernose. — The magistrates will have wooden heads of course, and they will be made of the toughest and thickest materials that can possibly be obtained.

"Professor Muff — I am quite satisfied. This is a great invention.

"Professor Nogo. — I see but one objection to it. It appears to me that the magistrates ought to talk.

"Mr. Coppernose no sooner heard this suggestion than he touched a small spring in each of the two models of magistrates which were placed upon the table ; one of the figures immediately began to exclaim with great volubility that he was sorry to see gentlemen in such a situation and the other to express a fear that the policeman was intoxicated.

"The section as with one accord declared with a shout of applause that the invention was complete ; and the President, much excited, retired with Mr. Coppernose to lay it before the council. On his return, —

"Mr. Tickle displayed his newly invented spectacles, which enabled the wearer to discern in very bright colors objects at a great distance, and rendered him wholly blind to those immediately before him. It was, he said, a most valuable and useful invention, based strictly upon the principle of the human eye.

"The President required some information upon this point. He had yet to learn that the human eye was remarkable for the peculiarities of which the honorable gentleman had spoken.

"Mr. Tickle was rather astonished to hear this, when the President could not fail to be aware that a large number of most excellent persons and great statesmen could see, with the naked eye, most marvellous horrors on West India plantations, while they could discern nothing what-

ever in the interior of Manchester cotton-mills. He must know, too, with what quickness of perception most people could discover their neighbor's faults, and how very blind they were to their own. If the President differed from the great majority of men in this respect, his eye was a defective one, and it was to assist his vision that these glasses were made.

"Mr. Blank exhibited a model of a fashionable annual, composed of copper-plates, gold leaf, and silk boards, and worked entirely by milk and water.

"Mr. Prosee, after examining the machine, declared it to be so ingeniously composed, that he was wholly unable to discover how it went on at all.

"Mr. Blank. — Nobody can, and that is the beauty of it.

"SECTION C. — ANATOMY AND MEDICINE.

"BAR-ROOM, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.

"PRESIDENT — DR. SOEMUP. VICE-PRESIDENTS — MESSRS. PESSSELL AND MORTAIR.

"Dr. Grummidge stated to the section a most interesting case of monomania, and described the course of treatment he had pursued with perfect success. The patient was a married lady in the middle rank of life, who having seen another lady at an evening party in a full suit of pearls, was suddenly seized with a desire to possess a similar equipment, although her husband's finances were by no means equal to the necessary outlay. Finding her wish ungratified, she fell sick, and the symptoms soon became so alarming, that he, Dr. Grummidge, was called in. At this period the prominent tokens of the disorder were sullenness, a total indisposition to perform domestic duties, great peevishness and extreme languor, except when pearls were mentioned, at which times the pulse quickened, the eyes grew brighter, the pupils dilated, and the patient, after various incoherent exclamations, burst into a passion of tears and exclaimed that nobody cared for her, and that she wished herself dead. Finding that the patient's appetite was affected in the presence of company, he began by ordering a total abstinence from all stimulants, and forbidding any sustenance but weak gruel; he then took twenty ounces of blood, applied a blister under each ear, one upon the chest and another on the

back ; having done which, and administered five grains of calomel, he left the patient to her repose. The next day she was somewhat low, but decidedly better ; and all appearances of irritation were removed. The next day she improved still further, and on the next again. On the fourth there was some appearance of a return of the old symptoms, which no sooner developed themselves than he administered another dose of calomel, and left strict orders that, unless a decidedly favorable change occurred within two hours, the patient's head should be immediately shaved to the very last curl. From that moment she began to mend, and in less than four-and-twenty hours was perfectly restored ; she did not now betray the least emotion at the sight or mention of pearls or any other ornaments. She was cheerful and good-humored, and a most beneficial change had been effected in her whole temperament and condition.

“ Mr. Pipkin, M. R. C. S., read a short but most interesting communication in which he sought to prove the complete belief of Sir William Courtenay, otherwise Thom, recently shot at Canterbury, in the Homœopathic system. The section would bear in mind that one of the Homœopathic doctrines was, that infinitesimal doses of any medicine which would occasion the disease under which the patient labored, supposing him to be in a healthy state, would cure it. Now it was a remarkable circumstance, — proved in the evidence, — that the diseased Thom employed a woman to follow him about all day with a pail of water, assuring her that one drop, — a purely Homœopathic remedy, the section would observe, — placed upon his tongue after death, would restore him. What was the obvious inference ? That Thom, who was marching and countermarching in osier beds and other swampy places, was impressed with a presentiment that he should be drowned ; in which case, had his instructions been complied with, he could not fail to have been brought to life again instantly by his own prescriptions. As it was, if this woman, or any other person, had administered an infinitesimal dose of lead and gunpowder immediately after he fell, he would have recovered forthwith. But unhappily the woman concerned did not possess the power of reasoning by analogy, or carrying out

a principle, and thus the unfortunate gentleman had been sacrificed to the ignorance of the peasantry.

“SECTION D. — STATISTICS.

“OUTHOUSE, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.

“PRESIDENT — MR. SLUG. VICE-PRESIDENTS — MESSRS. NOAKES AND STYLES.

“Mr. Kwakley stated the result of some most ingenious statistical inquiries relative to the difference between the value of the qualification of several members of Parliament as published to the world, and its real nature and amount. After reminding the section that every member of Parliament for a town or borough was supposed to possess a clear freehold estate of three hundred pounds per annum, the honorable gentleman excited great amusement and laughter by stating the exact amount of freehold property possessed by a column of legislators, in which he had included himself. It appeared from this table that the amount of such income possessed by each was 0 pounds, 0 shillings, and 0 pence, yielding an average of the same. (Great laughter.) It was pretty well known that there were accommodating gentlemen in the habit of furnishing new members with temporary qualifications, to the ownership of which they swore solemnly, — of course as a mere matter of form. He argued from these *data* that it was wholly unnecessary for members of Parliament to possess any property at all, especially as when they had none, the public could get them so much cheaper.

“SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION E. — UMBUGOLOGY AND DITCH-WATER-ISTICS.

“PRESIDENT — MR. GRUB. VICE-PRESIDENTS — MESSRS. DULL AND DUMMY.

“A paper was read by the secretary descriptive of a bay pony with one eye, which had been seen by the author standing in a butcher's cart at the corner of Newgate Market. The communication described the author of the paper as having, in the prosecution of a mercantile pursuit, betaken himself one Saturday morning last summer from Somers Town to Cheapside; in the course of which expedition he had beheld the extraordinary appearance above described. The pony had one distinct eye,

and it had been pointed out to him by his friend Captain Blunderbore of the Horse Marines, who assisted the author in his search, that whenever he winked this eye he whisked his tail, possibly to drive the flies off, but that he always winked and whisked at the same time. The animal was lean, spavined, and tottering; and the author proposed to constitute it of the family of *Fitfordogsmeataurians*. It certainly did occur to him that there was no case on record of a pony with one clearly defined and distinct organ of vision, winking and whisking at the same moment.

“Mr. Q. J. Snuffletoffle had heard of a pony winking his eye, and likewise of a pony whisking his tail, but whether they were two ponies or the same pony he could not undertake positively to say. At all events he was acquainted with no authenticated instance of a simultaneous winking and whisking, and he really could not but doubt the existence of such a marvellous pony in opposition to all those natural laws by which ponies were governed. Referring however to the mere question of his one organ of vision, might he suggest the possibility of this pony having been literally half asleep at the time he was seen, and having closed only one eye?”

“The President observed, that whether the pony was half asleep or fast asleep, there could be no doubt that the association was awake, and therefore that they had better get the business over and go to dinner. He had certainly never seen anything analogous to this pony; but he was not prepared to doubt its existence, for he had seen many queerer ponies in his time, though he did not pretend to have seen any more remarkable donkeys than the other gentlemen around him.

“Professor John Ketch was then called upon to exhibit the skull of the late Mr. Greenacre, which he produced from a blue bag, remarking, on being invited to make any observations that occurred to him, ‘that he’d pound it as that ’ere ’spectable section had never seed a more gamerer cove nor he vos.’

“A most animated discussion upon this interesting relic ensued; and some difference of opinion arising respecting the real character of the deceased gentleman, Mr Blubb delivered a lecture upon the cranium before

him, clearly showing that Mr. Greenacre possessed the organ of destructiveness to a most unusual extent, with a most remarkable development of the organ of carveativeness. Sir Hookham Snivey was proceeding to combat this opinion, when Professor Ketch suddenly interrupted the proceedings by exclaiming, with great excitement of manner, 'Walker!'

"The President begged to call the learned gentleman to order.

"Professor Ketch. — 'Order be blowed! you 've got the wrong 'un, I tell you. It ain't no 'ed at all; it 's a coker-nut as my brother-in-law has been acarvin' to hornament his new baked-tatur stall vots a-coming down here vile the 'sociation 's in the town. Hand over, vill you?'

"With these words Professor Ketch hastily repossessed himself of the cocoanut, and drew forth the skull, in mistake for which he had exhibited it. A most interesting conversation ensued; but as there appeared some doubt ultimately whether the skull was Mr. Greenacre's or a hospital patient's, or a pauper's, or a man's, or a woman's, or a monkey's, no particular result was attained.

"I cannot," says our talented correspondent in conclusion, — "I cannot close my account of these gigantic researches and sublime and noble triumphs, without repeating a *bon-mot* of Professor Woodensconce's, which shows how the greatest minds may occasionally unbend, when truth can be presented to listening ears, clothed in an attractive and playful form. I was standing by, when after a week of feasting and feeding, that learned gentleman, accompanied by the whole body of wonderful men, entered the hall yesterday, where a sumptuous dinner was prepared; where the richest wines sparkled on the board, and fat bucks — propitiatory sacrifices to learning — sent forth their savory odors. 'Ah!' said Professor Woodensconce, rubbing his hands, 'this is what we meet for; this is what inspires us; this is what keeps us together, and beckons us onward; this is the *spread* of science, and a glorious spread it is!'"

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